FIRST LOOK > Is The WHEEL of TIME TV's next GAME of THRONES?

Entertainment WEEKLY

HALLE *AT THE* HELM

The OSCAR WINNER steps INTO THE RING with her directorial debut, **BRUISED**

+

She talks shop with fellow icon **SPIKE LEE**

By
LEAH
GREENBLATT

EMMYS 2021

Snubs, *SHOCKS* & JEAN SMART!

/

SEX, LIES & TENNIS

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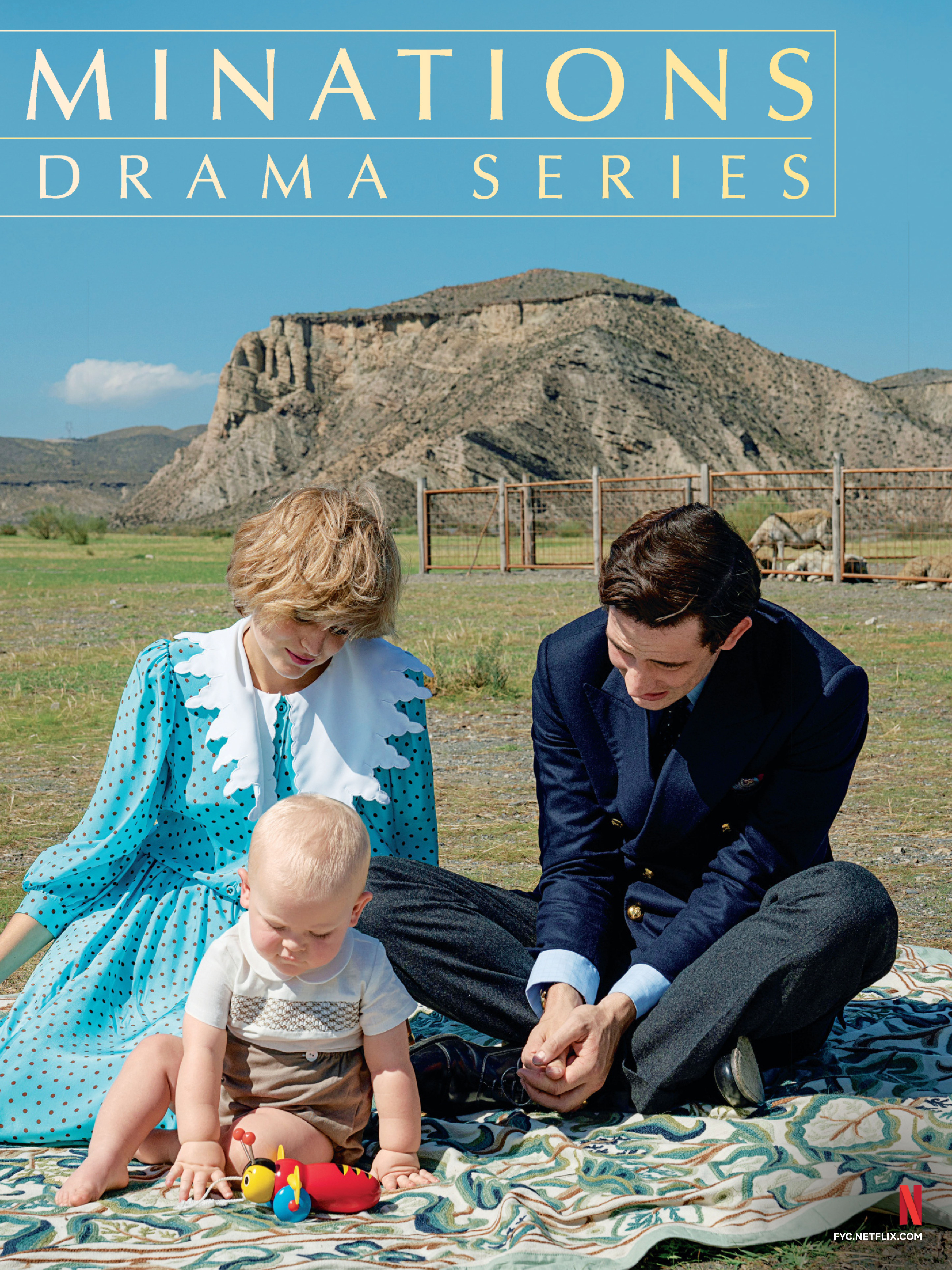
MINATIONS
DRAMA SERIES
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ON THE COVER
Halle Berry photographed exclusively for EW by James Macari on July 11, 2021, in Boston

STYLING: LINDSAY FLORES/ THE ONLY AGENCY; HAIR: SARA SEWARD; MAKEUP: JORGE MONROY; SET DESIGN: ROBIN REILLY/ANCHOR ARTISTS; TOP: DOLCE & GABBANA; PANTS: PETER PETROV; GLOVES: ON AURA TOUT VU

BLAZER: ETRO; NECKLACE, JEANS: CHURCH BOUTIQUE

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PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES MACARI

5 EMMY® NOMINATIONS

INCLUDING

OUTSTANDING DRAMA SERIES

"SHARP, ENTERTAINING SATIRE"

Los Angeles Times

AMAZON ORIGINAL

THE BOYS

FYC | prime video

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THIS MONTH'S SHARPEST LINES

Sound Bites

BY ➜ DEREK LAWRENCE 🐦@DEREKJLAWRENCE

"I doubt the god from space has to take an ibuprofen after a fight."

—Yelena (**Florence Pugh**), comparing Natasha (**Scarlett Johansson**) with her Avengers colleagues, in Black Widow

"I'M A TOTAL DERM NERD, A SKIN HEAD! WAIT, NO, NOT THAT."

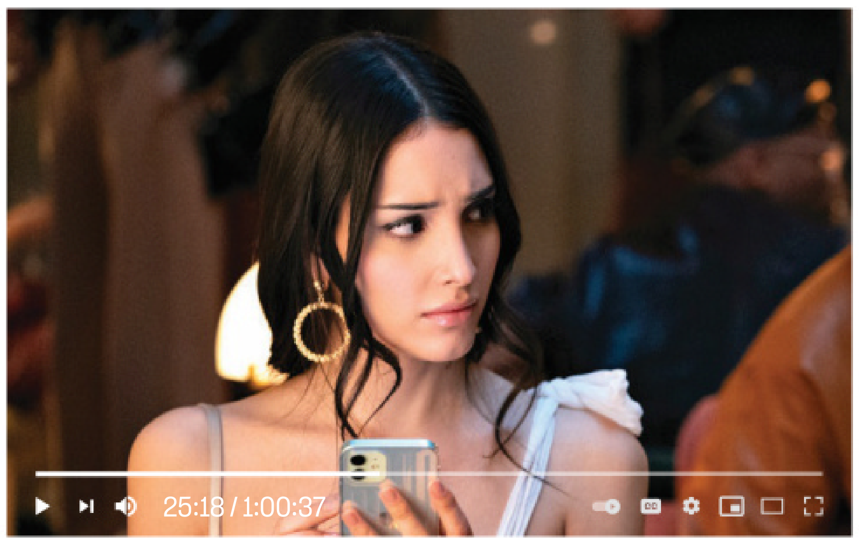
—Devi (**Maitreyi Ramakrishnan**), trying to fake interest in the work of her dermatologist mother, on Never Have I Ever

"WHAT BRINGS YOU TO TUNE WORLD? TORN MENISCUS? MIDLIFE CRISIS? RAN OUT OF TEAMS TO PLAY FOR?"

—**Bugs Bunny**, greeting LeBron James, in Space Jam: A New Legacy

"OH GOD, DID WE REALLY MAKE MICHAEL JORDAN CRY?"

—Rebecca (**Hannah Waddingham**), reading social media reactions after a match's shocking end, on Ted Lasso



#xoxo #gossipgirl

"Don't interrupt—especially not to say 'YouTube.'"

300,000 views • Sep 2021

👍 10 K 👎 15 ➦ SHARE ≡+ SAVE •••

—Luna La (**Zión Moreno**), chastising a freshman, on Gossip Girl

"I got an audition for *Rhythm + Flow*, dawg!"

"Are they rebooting a Terrence Howard pimp movie?"

—GaTa (**GaTa**), telling Mike (**Andrew Santino**) about his big opportunity on ~~Hustle & Flow~~ Netflix's music series, on Dave

THE BINGE BITE

"We wanted to make sure that the episodes were the best television that they could possibly be, and that took a lot of energy and our personal lives suffered as a result of it. [*Laughs*] But when you're in your early 20s, in my case, work was my life. I loved it."

—**Nina Dobrev**, reminiscing on playing Elena Gilbert

EW's BINGE: The Vampire Diaries is revisiting every season of the supernatural drama with the cast and creative team, including Julie Plec, Paul Wesley, and Nina Dobrev. Subscribe wherever you get your podcasts, or watch on EW's YouTube page.

BLACK WIDOW: JAY MAIDMENT/© MARVEL STUDIOS; *NEVER HAVE I EVER*: NETFLIX; *GOSSIP GIRL*: KAROLINA WOJTASIK/HBO MAX; *DAVE*: BYRON COHEN/FX (2); *THE VAMPIRE DIARIES*: TINA ROWDEN/THE CW

MJ RODRIGUEZ OUTSTANDING LEAD ACTRESS IN A DRAMA SERIES

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+ MORE

THE Cold Open

A MOUTHFUL OF POP CULTURE, ONE BITE AT A TIME

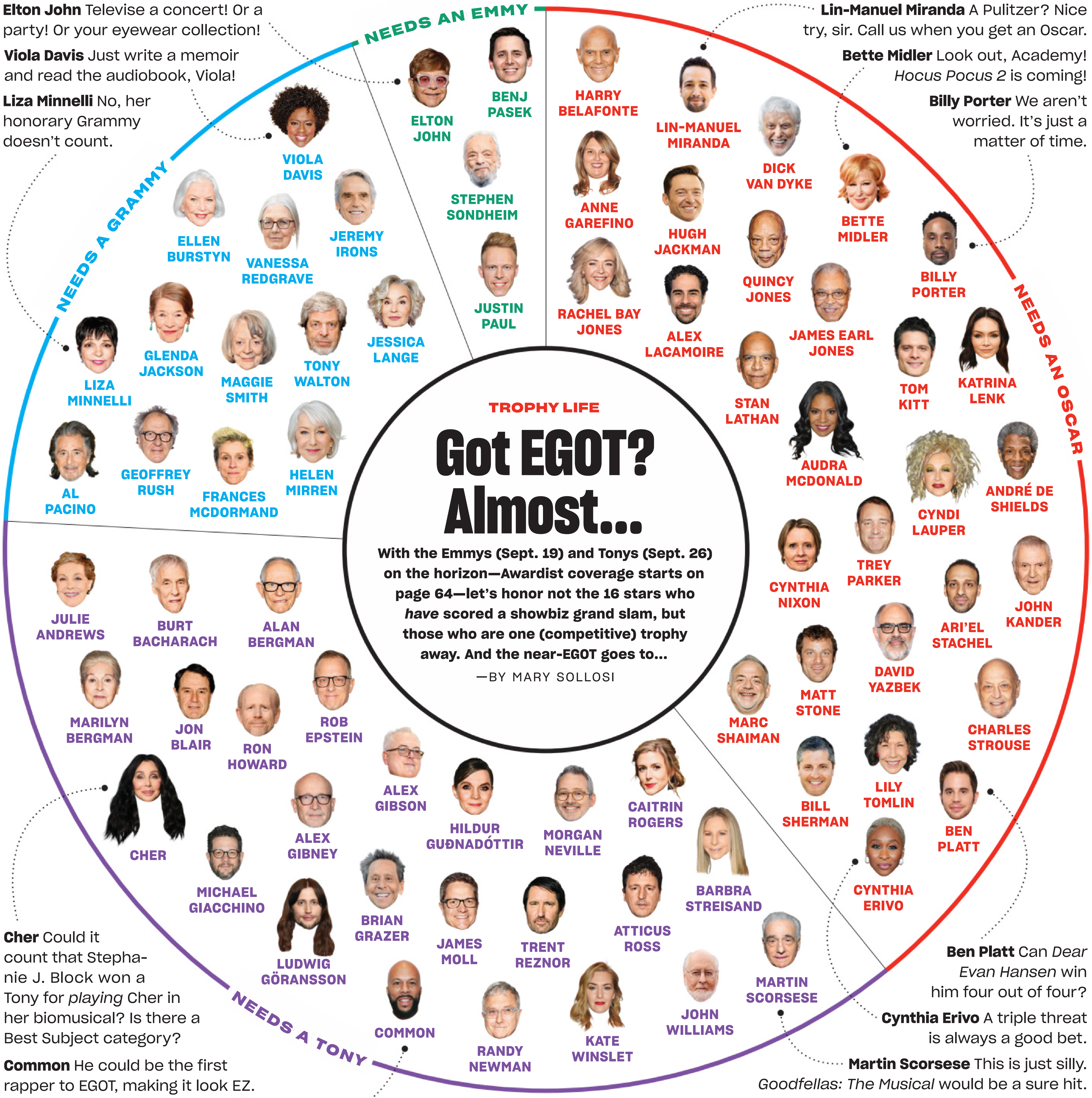
EDITED BY → DAN SNIERSON

TROPHY LIFE

Got EGOT? Almost...

With the Emmys (Sept. 19) and Tonys (Sept. 26) on the horizon—Awardist coverage starts on page 64—let's honor not the 16 stars who *have* scored a showbiz grand slam, but those who are one (competitive) trophy away. And the near-EGOT goes to...

—BY MARY SOLLOSI


NEEDS AN EMMY
ELTON JOHN
BENJ PASEK
STEPHEN SONDHEIM
JUSTIN PAUL
NEEDS A GRAMMY
VIOLA DAVIS
ELLEN BURSTYN
JEREMY IRONS
VANESSA REDGRAVE
GLENDA JACKSON
JESSICA LANGE
TONY WALTON
MAGGIE SMITH
LIZA MINNELLI
GEOFFREY RUSH
HELEN MIRREN
AL PACINO
FRANCES MCDORMAND
NEEDS AN OSCAR
HARRY BELAFONTE
LIN-MANUEL MIRANDA
DICK VAN DYKE
ANNE GAREFINO
HUGH JACKMAN
BETTE MIDLER
QUINCY JONES
BILLY PORTER
RACHEL BAY JONES
ALEX LACAMOIRE
JAMES EARL JONES
TOM KITT
KATRINA LENK
STAN LATHAN
AUDRA MCDONALD
CYNDI LAUPER
ANDRÉ DE SHIELDS
CYNTHIA NIXON
TREY PARKER
JOHN KANDER
ARI'EL STACHEL
DAVID YAZBEK
MARC SHAIMAN
MATT STONE
CHARLES STROUSE
BILL SHERMAN
LILY TOMLIN
BEN PLATT
CYNTHIA ERIVO
NEEDS A TONY
JULIE ANDREWS
BURT BACHARACH
ALAN BERGMAN
MARILYN BERGMAN
JON BLAIR
RON HOWARD
ROB EPSTEIN
ALEX GIBSON
CHER
MICHAEL GIACCHINO
ALEX GIBNEY
HILDUR GUÐNADÓTTIR
MORGAN NEVILLE
CAITRIN ROGERS
BARBRA STREISAND
BRIAN GRAZER
LUDWIG GÖRANSSON
JAMES MOLL
TRENT REZNOR
ATTICUS ROSS
COMMON
RANDY NEWMAN
KATE WINSLET
JOHN WILLIAMS
MARTIN SCORSESE

Elton John Televise a concert! Or a party! Or your eyewear collection!

Viola Davis Just write a memoir and read the audiobook, Viola!

Liza Minnelli No, her honorary Grammy doesn't count.

Lin-Manuel Miranda A Pulitzer? Nice try, sir. Call us when you get an Oscar.

Bette Midler Look out, Academy! *Hocus Pocus 2* is coming!

Billy Porter We aren't worried. It's just a matter of time.

Cher Could it count that Stephanie J. Block won a Tony for *playing* Cher in her biomusical? Is there a Best Subject category?

Common He could be the first rapper to EGOT, making it look EZ.

Ben Platt Can *Dear Evan Hansen* win him four out of four?

Cynthia Erivo A triple threat is always a good bet.

Martin Scorsese This is just silly. *Goodfellas: The Musical* would be a sure hit.

LIU: JASIN BOLAND/MARVEL STUDIOS; JOHN: MICHAEL KOVAC/GETTY IMAGES FOR EJAF; SONDHEIM, SHERMAN, GRAZER: ROY ROCHLIN/GETTY IMAGES (3); PASEK: SANTIAGO FELIPE/GETTY IMAGES; PAUL, GREY, JAMES EARL JONES, LENK, KANDER, STROUSE, JACKSON: WALTER MCBRIDE/GETTY IMAGES (7); BELAFONTE, MIDLER, HOWARD: TAYLOR HILL/WIREIMAGE (3); GAREFINO: ANGELA WEISS/GETTY IMAGES; BAY JONES: MIKE PONT/GETTY IMAGES FOR LINDT CHOCOLATE; MIRANDA: NOAM GALAI/GETTY IMAGES; JACKMAN: TRACEY NEARMY/GETTY IMAGES; LACAMOIRE: JEFF SPICER/GETTY IMAGES; LATHAN: PAUL ARCHULETA/FILMMAGIC; QUINCY JONES: JOHN SCIULLI/GETTY IMAGES FOR I.AM.ANGEL FOUNDATION; VAN DYKE, RUSH: AMANDA EDWARDS/GETTY IMAGES (2); MCDONALD, LAUPER, MCDORMAND: STEVE GRANITZ/WIREIMAGE (3); KITT, LANGE: JOHN LAMPARSKI/GETTY IMAGES (2); PORTER, GIBSON, GORANSSON: DAN MACMEDAN/GETTY IMAGES (3); SHIELDS, PARKER, STACHEL: BRUCE GLIKAS/FILMMAGIC (3); NIXON, NEVILLE: BRYAN BEDDER/GETTY IMAGES FOR AUDIBLE (2); SHAIMAN: JAMIE MCCARTHY/GETTY IMAGES; STONE, MINNELLI: TIBRINA HOBSON/GETTY IMAGES (2); YAZBEK: ILYA S. SAVENOK/GETTY IMAGES FOR TONY AWARDS PRODUCTIONS; TOMLIN: JB LACROIX/GETTY IMAGES; PLATT: ASTRID STAWIARZ/GETTY IMAGES; ERIVO: LEON BENNETT/WIREIMAGE; SCORSESE: GETTY IMAGES; STREISAND: JASON MERRITT/GETTY IMAGES FOR NETFLIX;

HOLLYWOOD HISTORY

1973

HOW *SCENES FROM A MARRIAGE* SPURRED A SWEDISH MARITAL CRISIS

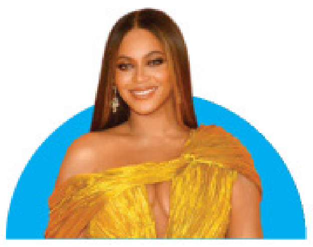
Most directors aim to inspire breakthroughs, not breakups, but Ingmar Bergman provoked both with the 1973 miniseries *Scenes from a Marriage*. After nearly half of Sweden's population watched *Marriage*'s crumbling couple (Liv Ullmann and Erland Josephson), divorce rates spiked to a record high. While the correlation is debatable, viewers did flock to Sweden's marriage-guidance service. "[The Stockholm office] saw a huge increase in calls, and the waiting list went from three weeks to three months," marvels Linda Haverty Rugg, a professor of Scandinavian literature and film at UC Berkeley. "People absorbed the series as if it were a documentary." Those phone lines weren't the only ones overloaded: Per Swedish custom, Bergman had a publicly listed number...until a deluge of callers seeking marital advice necessitated a private line. A new version of *Marriage* hits HBO this September (see page 14). Should Oscar Isaac and Jessica Chastain brace for another wave of connubial cries and whispers? —MAUREEN LEE LENKER

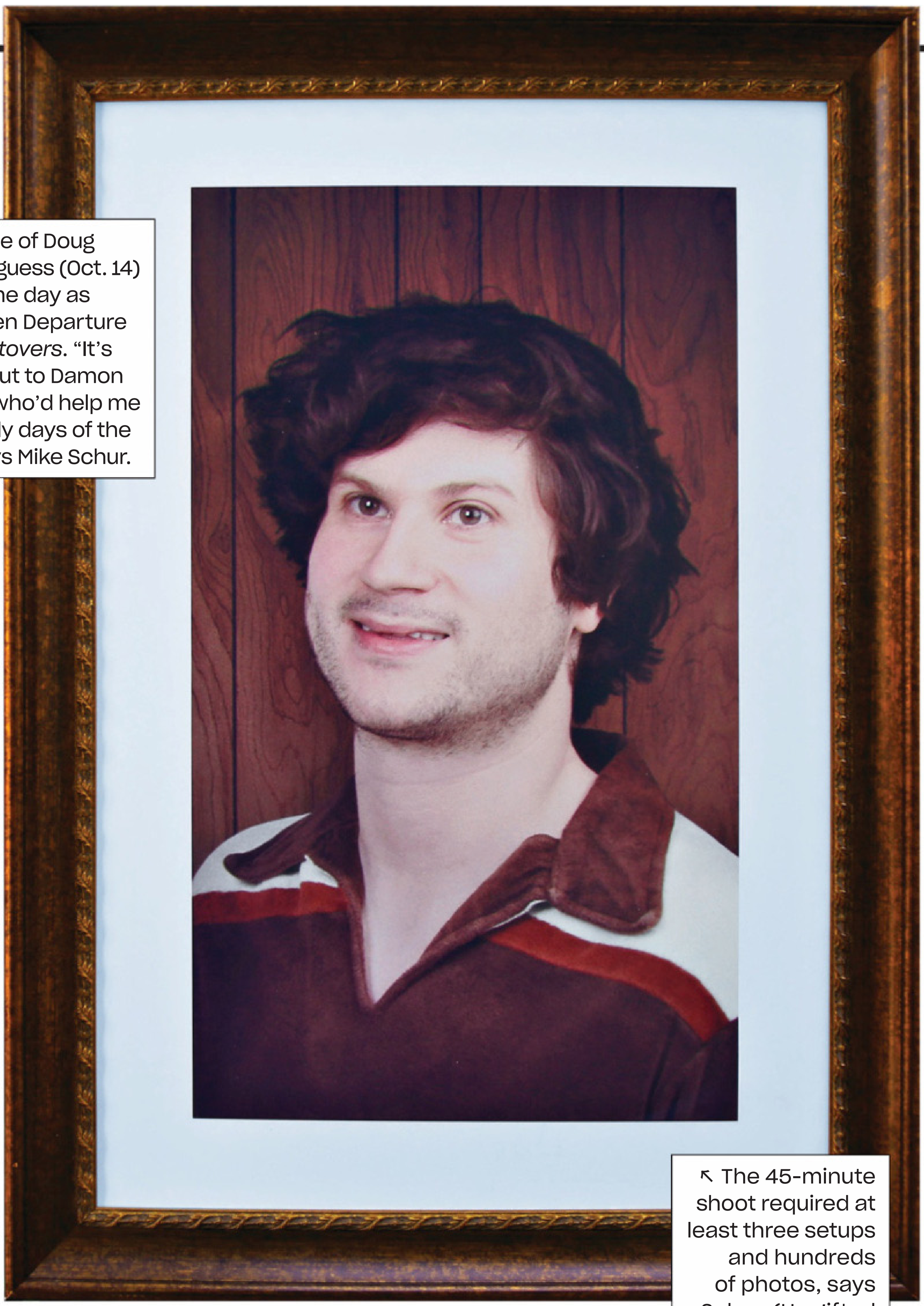
A BIRTHDAY HAIKU FOR

BEYONCÉ

SEPT.
4

Bey? Hey. So you say
you've turned...40? Run the world,
beautiful liar!





↘ The date of Doug Forcett's guess (Oct. 14) is the same day as the Sudden Departure in *The Leftovers*. "It's a shout-out to Damon Lindelof, who'd help me in the early days of the pilot," says Mike Schur.

DOUG FORCETT
CLOSEST GUESS
10/14/72

↖ The 45-minute shoot required at least three setups and hundreds of photos, says Schur. (He gifted Noah Garfinkel the framed one from the show.)

PROPS TO THE PROP

The *Good* Face

In the beginning, before frozen-yogurt shops permeated *The Good Place* and butthole spiders haunted the Bad Place, there was Doug Forcett. "It was one of the first details of the show I came up with," says creator Mike Schur of the Calgary teen who got stoned in the '70s and made a near-perfect prediction of how the afterlife worked. That prescience earned Forcett a portrait that was hung prominently in Michael's (Ted Danson) office and seen frequently on the series. (It's actually *New Girl* writer Noah Garfinkel.) Schur kept the plaque displayed under the frame, and enjoys its superlative. "I like that it says 'Closest Guess.' That's a funny thing to memorialize. It's not, you know, 'Nobel Prize Winner.'" Still forking good, though. —JESSICA DERSCHOWITZ

(PREVIOUS PAGE) ROGERS: RODRIGO VAZ/FILMMAGIC; ROSS, WILLIAMS: ALBERTO E. RODRIGUEZ/GETTY IMAGES (2); WINSLET, SMITH, REDGRAVE: DAVE BENETT/GETTY IMAGES (3); REZNOR, GUDNADOTTIR, EPSTEIN: RODIN ECKENROTH/FILMMAGIC (3); MOLL: FREDERICK M. BROWN/GETTY IMAGES; COMMON: JASON MENDEZ/GETTY IMAGES FOR THE TOWN HALL; GIBNEY: DOMINIK BINDL/WIREIMAGE; GIACCHINO: ALBERT L. ORTEGA/GETTY IMAGES; ALAN BERGMAN: MATHEW IMAGING/WIREIMAGE; CHER: CHRISTOPHER POLK/NBCU PHOTO BANK/GETTY IMAGES; MARILYN BERGMAN: CHELSEA LAUREN/WIREIMAGE; ANDREWS: EUGENE GOLOGURSKY/GETTY IMAGES FOR HAMPTONS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL; PACINO: FRAZER HARRISON/GETTY IMAGES; MIRREN: RACHEL MURRAY/GETTY IMAGES FOR L'ORÉAL PARIS; WALTON: JOE KOHEN/WIREIMAGE; BURSTYN: PAUL BRUINOOGE/PATRICK MCMULLAN VIA GETTY IMAGES; IRONS: ANDREAS RENTZ/GETTY IMAGES; DAVIS: JEROD HARRIS/FILMMAGIC

THE TOP 9 SONGS WHOSE TITLES ARE NUMBERS FROM JUST 0 TO 5

1 / "ONE" U2

2 / "ONE" METALLICA

3 / "ZERO" THE SMASHING PUMPKINS

4 / "ONE" HARRY NILSSON/THREE DOG NIGHT

5 / "1234" FEIST

(THIS SPREAD) *SCENES FROM A MARRIAGE*: EVERETT COLLECTION; BEYONCE: DAVE J HOGAN/GETTY IMAGES; *THE GOOD PLACE*: DAVID YEH/NBCU PHOTO BANK/GETTY IMAGES; ASTRONAUT: GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO; *LAST MAN ON EARTH*: JORDIN ALTHAUS/FOX; *Y: THE LAST MAN*: RAFY WINTERFELD/FX; *SHANG-CHI*: JASIN BOLAND/MARVEL STUDIOS; SPEARS: CHRIS WALTER/WIREIMAGE; FEIST: MATT WINKELMEYER/GETTY IMAGES FOR THE RECORDING ACADEMY

Houston, we have a commonality.

POSTAPOCALYPSE NOW!

Last Man Standoff

FX on Hulu's new comic-book adaptation *Y: The Last Man* (debuting Sept. 13) and Fox's cult sitcom *The Last Man on Earth* (2015–18) both feature a not-so-lone survivor on a journey beyond a fatal global calamity. And the eerie similarities don't end when the world does. —DARREN FRANICH

	THE LAST MAN ON EARTH	***Y: THE LAST MAN***
New tenants in 1600 Penn	After almost everyone everywhere on the planet dies, Phil Miller (Will Forte) and his wife, Carol (Kristen Schaal), move into the newly vacant White House.	After almost everyone and everything with a Y chromosome dies, protesters storm the newly vacant White House. Nobody dresses as a Viking.
Mask mandate	The series ends with Phil and friends surrounded by people who've been hiding underground. Nervous about infection, the new arrivals wear gas masks.	The series begins with Yorick (Ben Schnetzer) exploring empty Manhattan after hiding in his apartment. Nervous about infection, he wears a gas mask.
Trusty friends who won't bother you with any conversation at all, ever	Seemingly alone in the world, the only pals Phil can monkey around with are his sports balls. He paints their faces, which don't look realistic but are very funny.	Seemingly alone in a world of women, Yorick's only pal is his pet monkey named Ampersand. The capuchin has an, *errrr*, somewhat realistic face.
The landing is the hardest part. (Every other part is hard too.)	Lewis (Kenneth Choi) spends a long time learning to fly. When he sets off on his first voyage as a pilot, he crashes and dies in the ensuing explosion.	The *Y* adaptation spent a long time in development hell. After FX filmed its first pilot, showrunners and key actors made an emergency exit.
Um, astronauts!	One season of *Last Man* ends with a cliffhanger revealing that Phil's presumed-dead astronaut brother Mike (Jason Sudeikis) is alive in orbit.	One story arc of the *Y* comic ends with a cliffhanger revealing astronaut guys alive in orbit. If the show gets that far, EW will apologize for this spoiler.

THE EQUATION

$$\left\{\text{SHANG-CHI AND THE LEGEND OF THE TEN RINGS} = \textit{Good Will Hunting} \times \left(\frac{\text{Martial Arts}}{\text{Magical Jewelry}}\right) + \text{Daddy Issues} + \left(\text{The Mandarin} - \text{Ben Kingsley}\right)\right\}$$

COLUMN AS WE SEE 'EM

ASK DALTON

EW editor Dalton Ross answers your pop culture etiquette dilemmas

Q: My spouse won't let me hit the "Skip Intro" button when we binge-watch a show. Should I divorce?

A: Ask yourself this: Is your soul mate *really* your soul mate if they repeatedly insist you sit through 100 seconds of dots randomly bumping into one another before being allowed to witness Billy Crudup exclaiming, "Chaos: It's the new cocaine!" on *The Morning Show*? I'll let you, ahem, connect the dots on that one. Look, I could watch *The Good Fight* blow stuff up all damn day—and shows that constantly update their openers, such as *The Simpsons*, naturally demand multiple looks (even if viewing the map-obsessed *Game of Thrones* opening credits 73 times may make you feel as if you have unwittingly signed up for some sort of advanced medieval-cartography class). But while every intro deserves to be ingested all the way through at least once to appreciate the artistry on display, there are 3,412 other critically acclaimed series out there that none of us has time for, making every second precious. So rest assured that you are completely within your marital rights to require that your spouse join you on a trip to Skip City. And with that said...enjoy single life!

---

6 / "3" **BRITNEY SPEARS**

7 / "4" **APHEX TWIN**

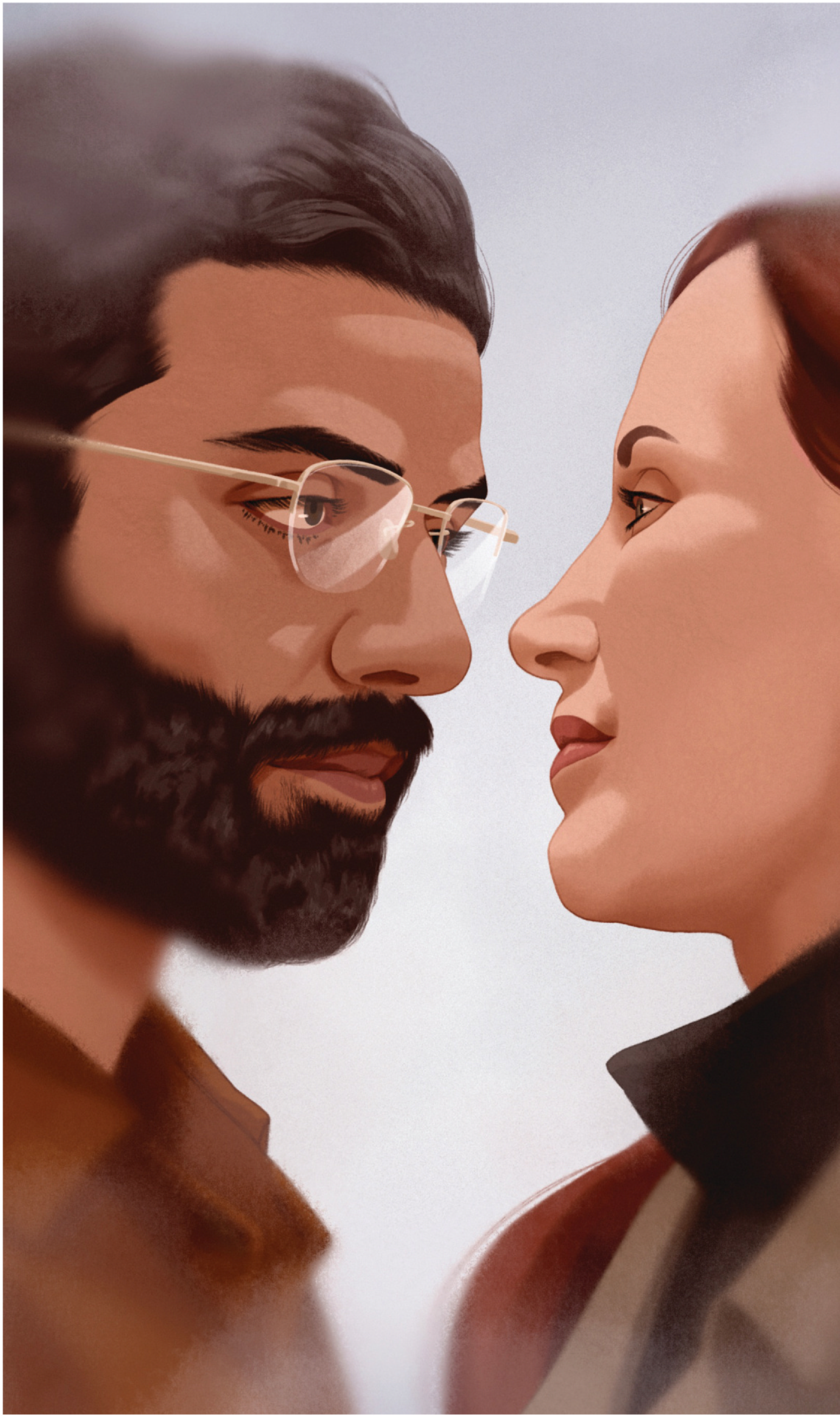
8 / "5-4-3-2-1" **MANFRED MANN**

9 / "10001110101" **CLUTCH**

ILLUSTRATION BY CAMERON K. LEWIS

THE Must List

THE TOP 10 THINGS WE LOVE THIS MONTH



EDITED BY
DEVAN COGGAN
@DEVANCOGGAN

ILLUSTRATION BY LEONARDO SANTAMARIA

№

1

SCENES FROM A MARRIAGE

TV

FITTINGLY, OSCAR ISAAC BEGAN his journey into *Scenes From a Marriage* with a proposal of sorts. After his very first meeting about potentially starring in a remake of Ingmar Bergman's 1973 miniseries, Isaac wrote to his friend Jessica Chastain and said, "I can't imagine doing this with anybody other than you." It would take a global pandemic reshuffling her schedule for Chastain to become available, but as Isaac knew right away, their shared history would prove essential.

"This is someone that knows me," the *Star Wars* actor remembers thinking. (Isaac and Chastain were classmates at Juilliard, have been friends for two decades, and previously played a married couple in 2014's *A Most Violent Year*.) "We have a similar language, and there's just total trust. And when I read [the script], I felt like this whole story is about that. To do this with someone who knows all your tricks, there's no way but to be honest."

Like the emotionally devastating original, the new *Scenes From a Marriage* (premiering Sept. 12 on HBO) puts love, marriage, and divorce under the microscope in an intimate two-hander. Isaac and Chastain play Jonathan and Mira, an upper-middle-class couple whose union unravels over five searing episodes, but whose bond remains palpable. Writer-director Hagai Levi (co-creator of *The Affair*) spent years trying to figure out how, or even if, he should adapt Bergman's series before he hit on the idea to reverse its gender dynamics, with Chastain's character sparking the couple's breakup. "One day I just started to read the original script while flipping the [characters'] genders," Levi recalls, "and suddenly the same text started to feel like something totally different." From there, he says, "everything fell into place."

The monthslong shoot, on a New York soundstage with a tiny crew, hit close to home for all involved. "Crew members would come up and talk to me about breakups they had had," Isaac recalls. "I think it's possible that [viewers], like a lot of the people that worked on it, will see aspects of themselves or aspects of their fears reflected [in the series]." For Levi, that kind of introspection is the goal: "I hope it's going to raise some discourse—debates, discussions, arguments, attacks. This is not just a private story. It should say something more than that." —TYLER AQUILINA

2

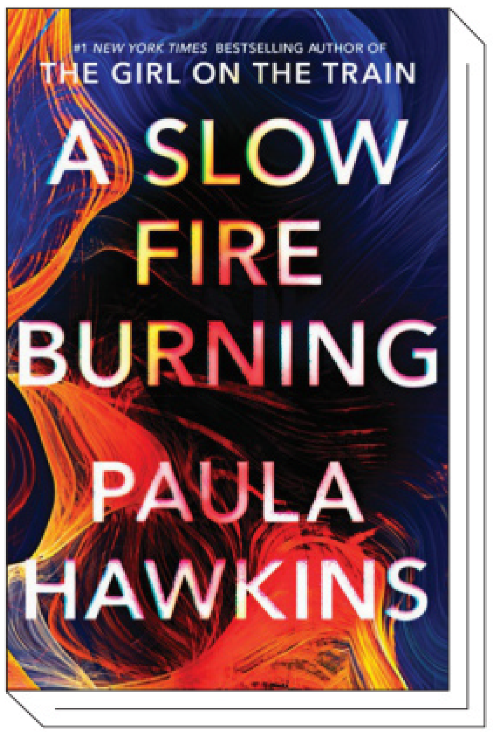
A SLOW FIRE BURNING

By Paula Hawkins

BOOKS

In her rapid rise to literary stardom—starting in 2015 with *The Girl on the Train* and followed by *Into the Water* two years later—thriller author Paula Hawkins has proved her prowess with unreliable narrators. Now, in her juicy third novel, she gives us five. When a young man is found stabbed to death on a London houseboat, everyone—including his recent (and quite down-on-her-luck) one-night stand, a busybody neighbor with enough personal dramas to fill her own houseboat, and estranged family members—is a suspect, each more inscrutable than the last. Where *Train* was a puzzle, *Fire*, with its web of characters aching for revenge, is an outright challenge: Those who dare to follow along will delight in narrative vindication.

—SEIJA RANKIN



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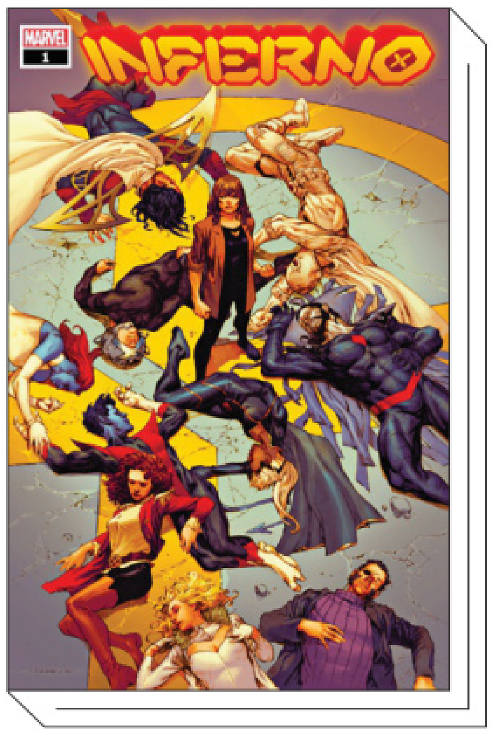
3

INFERNO

By **Jonathan Hickman**
and **Valerio Schiti**

COMICS

Since establishing their own independent nation-state of Krakoa, Marvel's X-Men have flourished on the isolated island. But now it's time to reckon with the sins of the past. In this four-issue event comic from writer Jonathan Hickman (*House of X*) and artist Valerio Schiti, Mystique wants what she's owed. It doesn't feel like a golden age when her wife, Destiny, remains lost. Decades of past comics only hinted at the pair's lesbian relationship, but now it's acknowledged openly, at the cost of a tragic separation. When Mystique decides she's willing to do whatever it takes to bring back her lover, will the idyllic dream of Krakoa come crashing down in flames? The most interesting superhero comics on stands are about to endure an explosion. —CHRISTIAN HOLUB



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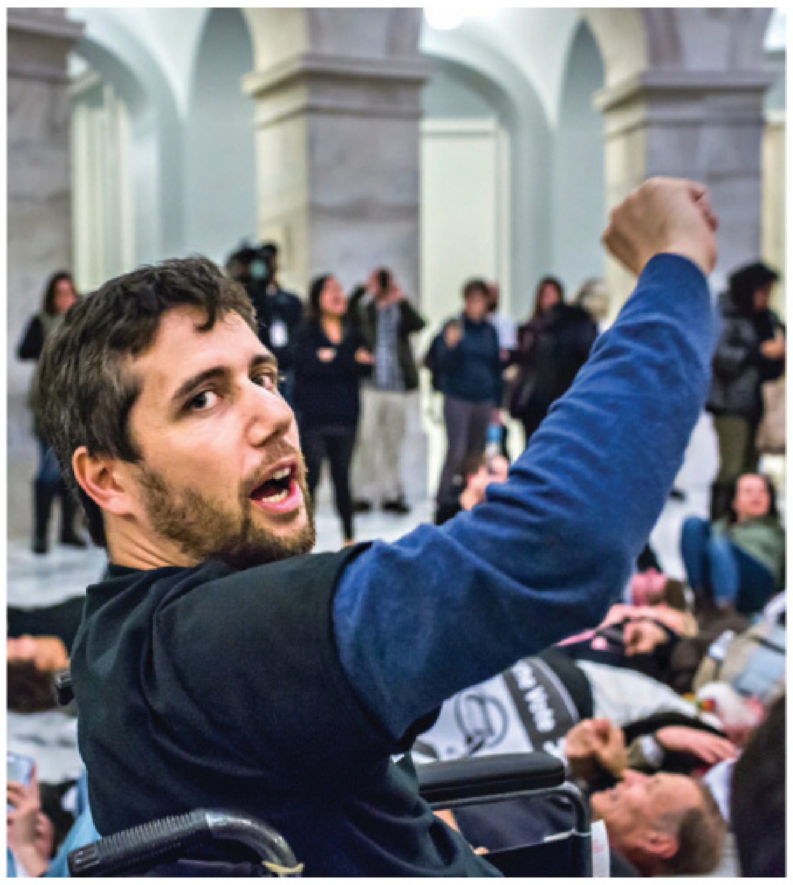
4

NOT GOING QUIETLY

MOVIES



Life was sweet for Ady Barkan: thriving career, chubby newborn, picture-perfect house. But in the fall of 2016, he was diagnosed with ALS. Instead of spiraling into self-pity, he launched a second career as an activist—a journey captured by Nicholas Bruckman in a documentary that's equal parts heartbreaking and humorous. "This disease did not break him," says executive producer Bradley Whitford. "This disease revealed him." —CLARISSA CRUZ

№

5

WHAT WE DO *IN THE* SHADOWS

TV

STATEN ISLAND HAS NEVER BEEN SO SPOOKY—OR SO HILARIOUS. FX's quartet of absurd vampire roommates is back for season 3 of this anarchic comedy (premiering Sept. 2). The new season kicks off with Nandor (Kayvan Novak), Laszlo (Matt Berry), Nadja (Natasia Demetriou), and the ever-irksome Colin Robinson (Mark Proksch) dealing with the fallout from last year's bloody finale, trying to decide what to do about their loyal familiar-slash-vampire-hunter Guillermo (Harvey Guillén). On one hand, he's a natural-born killer who's slaughtered dozens of their kind; on the other, he's the only one who knows how to troubleshoot the Wi-Fi. This season promises just as much blood, bats, and undead insanity. (Fingers crossed for the return of the toothpick-toting Jackie Daytona, everyone's favorite regular-human bartender.) —DEVAN COGGAN

№

6

KENA: BRIDGE OF SPIRITS

GAMES

Kena from *Bridge of Spirits*, a new videogame from studio Ember Lab, looks like a Disney heroine who could stand beside Raya of *The Last Dragon* or *Frozen*'s Elsa—with a *Legend of Korra* vibe. The strong-willed warrior and her adorably dimpled nature spirits embark on a quest to heal the entities of a lush forest. That's a credit to creators Josh and Mike Grier, who took what they learned making films to create a rich world of enchantment and heart. —NICK ROMANO

NOT GOING QUIETLY: MICHAEL NIGRO/SIPA USA; WHAT WE DO IN THE SHADOWS: FX

№

7

CODA

MOVIES

When the modestly scaled and relatively star-free coming-of-age drama *CODA* (on Apple TV+ now) sold for $25 million at Sundance this past January—far beyond the record price set the year before, for *Palm Springs*—it hardly seemed like the type of film to shatter festival records. But the charm in Siân Heder's indie breakout (see page 82) stems from the sweet specificity of her premise: British actress Emilia Jones is Ruby Rossi, the only hearing person in a deaf family (which includes Oscar winner Marlee Matlin). The Rossis are a rowdy bunch: brawlers, smokers, terminal jokers. Ruby has her own teenage dream, though—she wants to sing, and Heder (*GLOW*, *Orange Is the New Black*) imbues her heroine's journey with goofy scatological humor and smart, tender-hearted watchability. —LEAH GREENBLATT

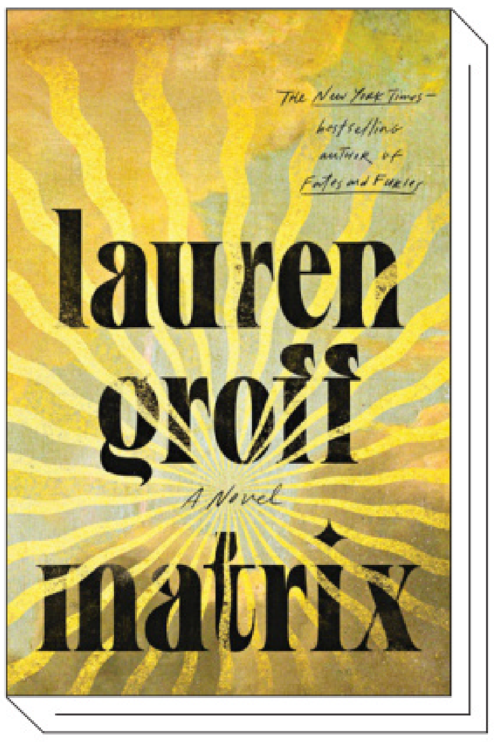
№

8

MATRIX

By Lauren Groff

BOOKS



A group of nuns in 12th-century Europe may seem like an unlikely subject for Lauren Groff, following the modern marriage refracted in her 2015 novel *Fates and Furies* (see page 112). In *Matrix*, however, readers will recognize her stunning prose and grand, mythic perspective. When Marie de France—a woman of special brilliance, but little beauty—is sent from Eleanor of Aquitaine's court to an impoverished English abbey, she finds her true calling (not in God, exactly, or at least only incidentally in God). A born leader with an understanding of female greatness in a world that so rarely knows how to use it, Marie grows into her power as part of this community of women, in a tale that feels both ancient and urgent, as holy as it is deeply human. —MARY SOLLOSI

№

9

NINE PERFECT STRANGERS

TV

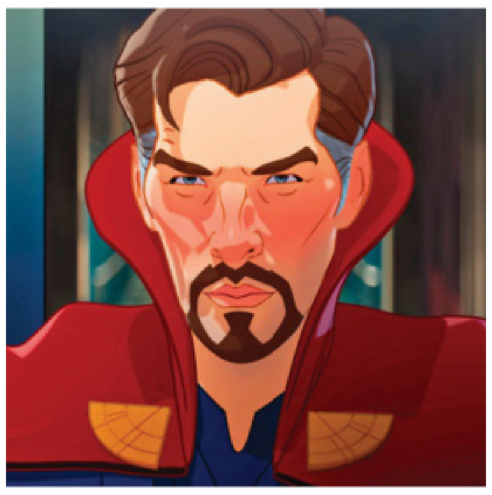
HULU'S EIGHT-PART MINISERIES BRINGS A GREAT CAST (MELISSA McCarthy, Michael Shannon, Regina Hall, Bobby Cannavale, and Manny Jacinto with a man bun!) to Tranquillum, a wellness Eden run by ultra-healer Masha (Nicole Kidman). Kidman goes big, all gossamer muumuus and icy accented serenity. McCarthy veers low-key as an endearing cynic. Shannon goes still *another* direction, stifling grief behind good cheer. It's a *Big Little Lies* reunion for Kidman, writer Liane Moriarty, and producer David E. Kelley, plus a familiar "Wealthy Sads on California Cliffs" premise. The locked-resort setting adds a weirdo edge, though. There is a potato-sack race, a watcher in the woods, a tragic goat, and DRUGS. *Strangers* mashes emotional intimacy with Goopy melodrama. A lot? Sure, but someone had to put the "*mas*" in "*Namaste*." —DARREN FRANICH

№

10

MARVEL STUDIOS' WHAT IF...?

TV



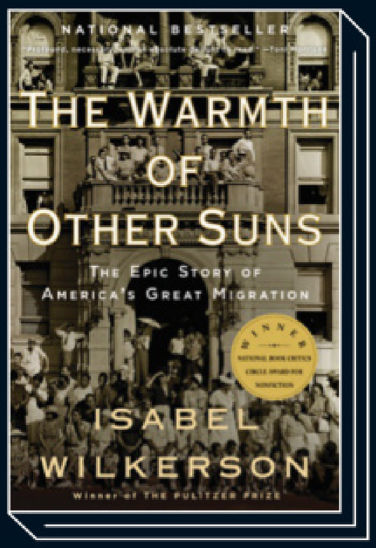
Forget everything you know about the Marvel Cinematic Universe. *What If...?*, the MCU's first animated series (Disney+), introduces an alternate version of events from the films, narrated by Jeffrey Wright's all-seeing Watcher. And there are no limits to where each story can go. "Whatever you think is never going in the movies is our show," head writer A.C. Bradley explains. Director Bryan Andrews adds that he felt like the ultimate fan on every episode: "We're going weirder and crazier, just nerding out on what we would want to see. You have no idea what's coming." —SYDNEY BUCKSBAUM

CODA: APPLE; *NINE PERFECT STRANGERS*: HULU; *WHAT IF...?*: MARVEL STUDIOS

MY MUST LIST

JEFF DANIELS

The two-time Emmy winner—for Godless *and* The Newsroom*—returns to the small screen as police chief Del Harris in Showtime's adaptation of the Philipp Meyer book* American Rust *(Sept. 12). "It's about good people at the bottom who are forced to do things to survive," the 66-year-old explains. Here, Daniels shares the pop culture that has brought meaning to his life.*


NATIONAL BESTSELLER
THE WARMTH OF OTHER SUNS
THE EPIC STORY OF AMERICA'S GREAT MIGRATION
ISABEL WILKERSON
Winner of the Pulitzer Prize

BOOKS

THE WARMTH OF OTHER SUNS

By **Isabel Wilkerson**

It's about the Great Migration that people of color took in the decades after the Civil War. They moved to Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee, places like that. I read her book *Caste* six months ago. It should be required reading for every white person in America.

MOVIES

THE WORK OF BARBARA STANWYCK

I watch TCM. I'm interested in the transition actors made from movie-star close-up stuff to what people like Barbara Stanwyck did. She was ahead of her time, where she was just able to throw away lines and not make everything a movie-star moment. It was a subtlety that De Niro and Pacino later took and did even more with.

TV

IMPRACTICAL JOKERS TRUTV

I am constantly pulled back to whatever episode that's playing. I cannot get enough of those guys. I just can't get enough. Even if I've seen the episode and know the bit and know what's coming, it's still painfully funny. I mean, it goes back to the days of *Candid Camera* with Allen Funt.

STAGE

TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

I'll never top the feeling of standing on the Shubert Theatre stage, giving Atticus Finch's closing argument to the audience, treating them as if they're the old white jury with their arms crossed and going, "Hurry up. He's guilty."

the BLACK KEYS
DELTA KREAM

MUSIC

THE BLACK KEYS

DELTA KREAM **(2021)**

Driving to and from Pittsburgh (for *Rust*), I'd enjoy the Black Keys. They bring some of the old blues guys to sit in. It's hypnotic, some of the grooves they get into.

C.F. Martin & Co.
EST. 1833
Custom Shop

BONUS

THE NEXT LICK ON HIS GUITAR

That gives me pure joy—sitting on my porch glider with my Martin guitar, playing for my dog. Within a minute, he's up on the glider with me.

—AS TOLD TO LYNETTE RICE

DANIELS: PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARTIN SCHOELLER; STANWYCK: SILVER SCREEN COLLECTION/GETTY IMAGES; *IMPRACTICAL JOKERS*: JEREMY FREEMAN/TRUTV; MARTIN GUITAR: RICHARD ECCLESTONE/REDFERNS; *TO KILL A MICKINGBIRD*: SARA KRULWICH/THE NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX

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Dove Dry Spray Antiperspirant
dries instantly and keeps you
protected for 48 hours.

Dove
advanced care
¼ moisturizers with natural oil
dry spray · go fresh
cool essentials
antiperspirant deodorant
non-irritant
48h

48h
protection

Ashley, Building Operations Specialist

THE FIGHTER

HALLE BERRY
On the eve of her directorial debut, ***BRUISED***, the star gets real about fame, aging, and speaking truth to Hollywood

By
LEAH GREENBLATT
@LEAHBATS

Photographs by
JAMES MACARI

NOT LONG AGO, HALLE BERRY APPEARED as a guest on *Hot Ones*, the viral YouTube talk show in which assorted celebrities (Billie Eilish, Charlize Theron, Shaq) agree to eat chicken wings of increasingly ungodly spice levels until they either quit, cry, or lose control of their fine motor skills. As she worked her way through a series of sauces with names like Chocolate Plague and Da' Bomb Beyond Insanity, Berry came across as charming and funny and self-deprecating, talking easily about old Kanye lyrics and dog-training tips. But when the show's host presented her with an endurance trophy at the finish line and asked whether there was anyone she'd like to thank, she turned unexpectedly blunt: "I'm gonna thank my damn self on this one," she shook her head, half-delirious on habaneros. "Because I did it. Nobody helped me. Nobody prepared me, either… Thank my damn self."

Thirty years into a storied but often unpredictable career—and nearly 20 after she became the first and still only Black woman in history to win a Best Actress Oscar, for 2001's *Monster's Ball*—Berry has consistently managed to ride out the fickle heat index of Hollywood. She's also learned the hard way how much that work could fall to her alone. Soon after *Hot Ones* aired, she began shooting what would become her directorial debut, *Bruised* (Netflix, Nov. 24), a scrappy indie drama in which she also stars as Jackie Justice, a disgraced MMA fighter grasping for one last shot in the ring. The movie never should have come to her at all: Originally, it was conceived as a Blake Lively vehicle with Nick Cassavetes (*The Notebook*, *The Other Woman*) at the helm. "They gave me the script and I loved the story, but it was written for a twentysomething Irish Catholic white woman," Berry recalls on a rainy summer Sunday in Boston, where she's temporarily posted for her next project. "I couldn't get it out of my mind, so I thought, is it possible that this could be reimagined for someone like me? Because I think I have a take on it that could actually work—making it about a middle-aged Black woman, someone fighting for a last chance rather than another chance. When you're young we all get chances, they're a dime a dozen. But when you're at a certain stage in life it becomes something more impactful and meaningful, right? So about six months later when [Lively] decided in her own time that it wasn't for

TOP: DOLCE & GABBANA; PANTS: PETER PETROV; SHOES: ROGER VIVIER; GLOVES: ON AURA TOUT VU

her, I went to the producer, Basil Iwanyk, who I'd just done *John Wick 3* with, and gave him my pitch. And he said, 'Great, we love that idea. Now go find a director.' "

Berry, a longtime UFC loyalist and fan of eye-of-the-tiger touchstones like *Rocky*, *Raging Bull*, *Girlfight*, and *Million Dollar Baby*, dutifully met with nearly a dozen potential takers, but left disappointed: "I had to go back and say, 'I've tried really hard, but what's in my head, no one else sees. This is going to sound really crazy because it's crazy for me to even think it, but I think I should direct this.' " Iwanyk agreed, and she began to customize the story line, bringing on Adan Canto (*Designated Survivor*) as Jackie's abusive manager/boyfriend, *Good Girls*' Danny Boyd Jr. as her estranged 6-year-old son, and a statuesque British stage actress named Sheila Atim as Bobbi "Buddhakan" Berroa, the reluctant trainer who also becomes her love interest (see page 28). Still, stepping

← Halle Berry's Jackie Justice gets bloodied by real-life UFC champion Valentina Shevchenko

↙ Berry and onscreen son Danny Boyd Jr. bond warily over pizza

into the top jobs on both sides of the camera seemed like a preposterous risk; the physical training alone would be brutal. There was also the question of believability: Could audiences buy a prizefighter, even a broken one, in her 50s?

It's become cliché by now to note the almost surreal endurance of Berry's beauty; whole corners of the internet remain dedicated to it. In person, though, it's nearly impossible not to stare at the startling symmetry of her face; her fight-club-honed body, too—even clad as unobtrusively as it is today in low-key black from neck to toe, like the world's chicest street mime—does not appear to acknowledge the mortal effects of age or gravity.

She credits good luck and clean living (a by-product of decades dealing with type 1 diabetes) for keeping her so improbably fit, as well as extensive training for heavy-load action films from 2004's *Catwoman* to the X-Men franchise. Still, it's hard to picture most actresses in her demographic putting themselves in front of a fist—and uncountable elbows, and at least one vicious roundhouse kick—with as much willful abandon as she does in *Bruised*. In fact, Berry broke two ribs on the first day of shooting (not the same ribs, it should be said, that were cracked on *Wick*: "When you break something, it calcifies and it's stronger. You don't usually break the same bones twice," she explains helpfully.)

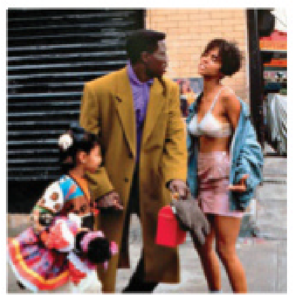
Realizing the stakes, Berry chose to work through the pain and not pause production. With *Wick*, she recalls, "I told the director about it, they told the insurance. We had to shut down for months and it was a big ordeal. On this, because it was an independent movie, we didn't have a big budget. The director in me said, 'I didn't come this far and work this hard to go home.'" The location of the break, says fight choreographer and stunt coordinator Eric Brown, is "kind of a crazy injury. But that was just her intensity.... Halle's a special case. I've worked with tons of actors, and almost none of them have that kind of work ethic."

Berry's IMDb page backs him up; she's rarely been snobbish or half-committed when it comes to genre, moving between big-bang popcorn (*X-Men*, *Swordfish*) and quieter dramas (*Frankie & Alice*, *Things*

BRUISED: JOHN BAER/NETFLIX (3); JUNGLE FEVER, B. A. P. S., INTRODUCING DOROTHY DANDRIDGE, X-MEN: PHOTOFEST (4); BOOMERANG, BULWORTH: EVERETT COLLECTION (2); MONSTER'S BALL: JEANNE LOUISE BULLIARD/LIONSGATE; DIE ANOTHER DAY: KEITH HAMSHERE/MGM; CATWOMAN: DOANE GREGORY/WARNER BROS.; THEIR EYES ARE WATCHING GOD: VIVIAN ZINK/ABC; CLOUD ATLAS: JAY MAIDMENT/WARNER BROS.; JOHN WICK 3: PARABELLUM: MARK ROGERS/LIONSGATE

HALLE'S HISTORY

From B.A.P. to Bond girl, purring Catwoman to grieving widow, Berry has played it all on screen



1991
Jungle Fever
Vivian

1992
Boomerang
Angela

1997
B.A.P.S
Nisi

1998
Bulworth
Nina

1999
Introducing Dorothy Dandridge
Dorothy Dandridge

↑ The actress-director steps out mid-fight-scene to check the shot

We Lost in the Fire), with an underappreciated sideline in comedy (the fandom for ’90s gems like *Boomerang* and *B.A.P.S* in particular endures). Even after an Emmy and a Golden Globe for the 1999 TV movie *Introducing Dorothy Dandridge* and her 2002 Academy Award, though, she found herself still struggling to land the kind of roles that most white actresses with her bankability and trophy case would presume as a birthright. The result is a resumé, she readily admits, guided as much by economic necessity as artistic choices: “It’s like, okay, that’s a film I can’t say I’m totally in love with, but this isn’t a hobby. It’s how I take care of my children. But I try to keep that sense of wonder and stay curious. Because being a Black woman, I haven’t always had parts that I absolutely love.”

“It was surprising,” she acknowledges of her prospects post-Oscar, when the expected deluge of offers for prestige directors and projects never came. “Because I thought they were going to just back up the truck and drop them off at my house, right? When you have a historic win like that, you think, ‘Oh, this is going to fundamentally change.’ It did fundamentally change *me*, but it didn’t change my place in the business overnight. I still had to go back to work. I still had to try to fight to make a way out of no way.”

As both boss and star, *Bruised* allowed her—budget and broken bones permitting—a kind of agency she’s never had before, especially when it came to expressing sexuality on screen. After years of being directed by others, she says it was crucial to make her love scenes with Atim not only “beautiful, but something that felt realistic and not salacious. Sheila was as in charge of it as I was, and that’s how I like it, because we’re exposing part of ourselves. It’s an intimacy.”

Berry’s well aware that past roles haven’t always allowed for that same level of nuance or control. Still, she’s adamant about owning the entirety of her career—even *Catwoman*, the latexed slice of superhero camp whose grim reviews lined the litter box, earning her a Razzie award. (In typical good humor, she accepted in

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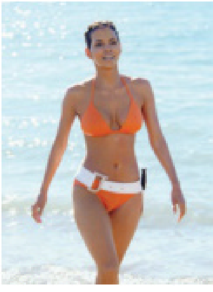
2000/2003/2006/2014
X-Men
Ororo Munroe/
Storm

2001
Monster’s Ball
Leticia Musgrove

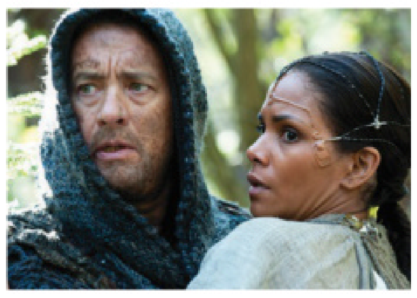


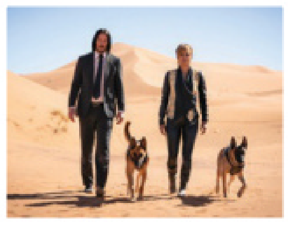
2002
Die Another Day
Jinx Johnson

2004
Catwoman
Patience
Phillips

2005
Their Eyes Were Watching God
Janie Starks

2012
Cloud Atlas
Meronym*





2019
John Wick: Chapter 3—Parabellum
Sofia

**Also: Enslaved Tribeswoman, Jocasta Ayrs, Luisa Rey, Indian Party Guest, and Dr. Ovid* person, and brought her Oscar along to the podium.) "For me," she insists, "it was one of the biggest paydays of my whole life, which, there's nothing wrong with that.... I don't want to feel like 'Oh, I can only do award-worthy stuff.' What *is* an award-worthy performance?"

Still, the press narrative that solidified around her—that she was not in charge of her personal or professional direction, that she was somehow Oscar-cursed—eventually left her so disillusioned that for nearly a decade, "I just stopped talking. I thought, 'I can't keep allowing people to tell me the same story, the same version of who I am.' I have evolved, I've moved on, I'm grown. Let me live!" she exclaims, as close to exasperated as she's sounded all day. "Social media has been great for that because I get to be who I am. And they get to meet me where I'm at, not in the past." An early enthusiastic adopter of Twitter and Instagram, Berry has indeed built up an engaging and gratifyingly unfiltered presence online—posting throwbacks, memes, and occasional clapbacks in ways that seem both determinedly positive (she often uses the platform to lift up people she admires, particularly young women of color) and refreshingly unmodulated by actressy ego or marketing concerns.

She chooses to see the rise of smaller screens as a new kind of freedom for filmmaking, too: "With the pandemic I think we pushed ourselves probably 15 years ahead, because people want to watch things at home on their own time. They want to stop it and start it. So I think we have to start reimagining and rethinking how we're evolving. People have said to me, 'You made an independent movie. Why would you sell it to Netflix?' Because I'm assured people will see it, and that's the goal! That is ultimately the goal."

Increasingly, Berry is leaning into the screen-to-stream model; after playing an astronaut in the upcoming Roland Emmerich action blowout *Moonfall*, due in multiplexes early next year, she signed on to shoot another Netflix project, *The Mothership*, a family-centered sci-fi story helmed by *Bridge of Spies* screenwriter Matt Charman. Daily 4 a.m. call times preclude her from doing much off set in Boston besides spending time with her kids—taking son Maceo, 7, to local farms and go-kart tracks, or walking 13-year-old daughter Nahla across the Commons to watch *In the Heights*. Again. ("Ten times!" she says, laughing. "I'm like, 'Can we please see something else?' ") But when *Mothership* wraps, she says, she wouldn't say no to a second crack at television—2014's Steven Spielberg-produced *Extant* ran for two seasons on CBS, and made her one of the first movie stars to sign on to the TV renaissance—another action franchise, or an eventual transition into directing full-time. "It used to be when you were 40 your career was done, and I mean really done," she says. "Or you had to wait until you were old enough to play a grandma, and then you could have another bite at the apple, right? I mean, I couldn't think that I'd be playing an MMA fighter at 54 years old. Yet I did, so it's got to be changing. I'm proof of that." It's a brave new world for more than just Berry, of course; the long, messy work of progress takes uncountable moving parts. But she can still thank her damn self, to start. ●

A KNOCKOUT PERFORMANCE

Between *Bruised* and Oscar winner Barry Jenkins' limited series *The Underground Railroad*, U.K. newcomer **SHEILA ATIM** is breaking out Stateside

If Sheila Atim were a gambler, she wouldn't have bet on her *Bruised* audition. The Ugandan-born Londoner, now 30, was shooting Barry Jenkins' Emmy-nominated limited series *The Underground Railroad* when she got the casting call: "I was taping [my audition] in the window sill of my hotel," she remembers, "and if you've ever been to Savannah, Georgia, there's lots of buses that go around to do these historical tours, so either I messed up the take or the tour bus would mess it up, and it just took forever. I was like, 'Oh my gosh, what am I doing? I'm never going to get this job anyway! This is ridiculous.' " Instead, she got the part—and soon found herself playing both hard-nosed trainer and paramour to Halle Berry's washed-up MMA fighter. For Atim, whose background is primarily in British theater, it would also be her first onscreen sex scene. "Halle always referred to their interaction as a scene of love, which I've never heard before but I think is lovely," she says. "Because it really is just two people connecting above anything else." Now she faces not just the global exposure of a Netflix audience, but the reactions of her friends back home. "I'm bracing myself," she admits with a laugh. "They're all really looking forward to seeing how good-slash-terrible-slash-over-the-top my Cockney accent is."

BRUISED: JOHN BAER/NETFLIX (3); (PHOTOSHOOT) STYLING: LINDSAY FLORES/THE ONLY AGENCY; HAIR: SARA SEWARD; MAKEUP: JORGE MONROY; SET DESIGN: ROBIN REILLY/ANCHOR ARTISTS; TAILOR: KRISTEN LOMBARDI/ANCHOR ARTISTS (OPPOSITE PAGE) BLAZER: ETRO; NECKLACE, JEANS: CHURCH BOUTIQUE

DIRECTOR TO DIRECTOR

HALLE BERRY & SPIKE

EW Do you two remember how you met? I would guess it was sometime during the casting process for *Jungle Fever*.

LEE I think you came in what, five, six times?

BERRY It was many.

LEE It was more than once. And you were just too fine in my mind to be a two-dollar crack ho. [But] I heard somebody told you, "You got to dress like the role," and you did, and the rest is history.

BERRY Yes. And I knew that I had to do that, because I knew I was fighting that model-turned-actor stigma, and that I would be perceived just on my physicality. So when they say, "What was your breakthrough?" I say, "It was Spike, because he was the first person that really allowed me to be seen other than for my physical self." To be in a Spike Lee movie, at the time that was huge. But to also play a character that was so opposite of what anybody thought I was—you gave me that chance.

LEE One of my most memorable scenes in all the films I've done was that Taj Mahal scene with Stevie Wonder's epic song "Living for the City." You're following [Wesley Snipes'] character, who's trying to find his brother, Gator [Samuel L. Jackson].

BERRY I had never seen a crack den or anything like that, so I had to actually go get in that environment to understand what that was.

LEE People told me that scene, it gave them nightmares.

LEE

Thirty years ago, he cast her in her first movie role. In a globe-crossing chat with EW, the longtime friends caught up on old times and new gigs.

← Spike Lee and Halle Berry on the New York set of the 1991 drama *Jungle Fever*, Berry's big-screen debut

That's how hellish it was. But we did not want to glamorize that s---, which was destroying Black and brown communities. We're still dealing with the devastation of crack. That was our pandemic, you might say.

BERRY Well, that's what's always been important about you for me—that that's what you've always done with your art. And I'm not saying something that the world doesn't know. You always had something very strong to say, and you would unabashedly say it.

LEE Halle, you know me and you go way back. So I'm not going to be telling you no bulls---. You know? We got a history. So when you said, "Spike, I directed this film, and I want you to see the early cut." It was an honor.... And when I saw it, I was like, "Oh. This is hot." You're playing a boxer, and I heard that you got a broken rib or something. But you persevered like, "What's up?" Just did your thing. And I'm looking forward to seeing the final cut, but just the early one you gave me, I was blown away.

BERRY Oh, Spike. Well, you were the first person I called. And you know why? Because I knew that out of anybody I could show it to, that you would want me to win. And you would shoot me straight. And there's something you told me that I went back and fixed. You said a lot of nice things, but then you said, "But let me tell you what you need to do. You need to get rid of those cheesy heartbeat sounds." You said, "Trust your performances. Get rid of all that cheesy s---."

LEE Well, that might have been a little too harsh. I'm a professor at NYU, so I try to be blunt, but I don't want to destroy anybody's confidence. Give criticism with love. So I really try to be constructive. L-O-V-E, not H-A-T-E, you know?

BERRY And you gave me that. You filled me up. Everything that you said I took to real heart, and I went back to the editing room.

LEE Now, so are you just acting in this new film [the sci-fi adventure tale *Mothership*]?

BERRY Yes, and I got to tell you it's a relief in a way, just to show up and do one job. I doubt I'll ever act and direct again. I mean, this had to happen this way. I get that.

LEE First time directing, acting, and you're leading a film, too.

BERRY Yeah. And it was a huge role, having to fight and train and do all the things that I had to do just as an actor. There were so many things that I had to work against and deal with on the daily. I'm glad I did it, but I'll never do it again.

LEE Hold up, hold up, hold up. Let's not use the word *never* right now. Okay?

BERRY Well...

LEE Here's the thing, though, Halle. You were built for it. Can I repeat that? You were built for this. So don't use the word *never*.

BERRY You're right. I should have learned that by now. But put it this way: I'm looking forward to the time when I get to be behind the camera and not acting. [*Laughs*]

EW Will we ever get to see you two reunite on screen?

BERRY Oh, I'm dying to do that. Spike just has to find a role and ask me, and I'm there.

LEE Listen, you're still in Boston? You got to come to Martha's Vineyard. I've had a house there 20 years. And Black folks, we're all up in there.

BERRY I know! People have been telling me that. But the problem is on my weekends I have fight rehearsals.

LEE Fight rehearsal? You're fighting again?

BERRY Yes, it's my new thing, Spike. Haven't you heard? I'm now an action hero. [*Laughs*]

LEE Alright, sis. I'm sending love from Helsinki, Finland, where it's still broad daylight at 10:35 p.m. Oh, one last thing: Do not become a fan of any team in Boston—Celtics, Patriots, Bruins. You're not one of those people. And don't wear a Yankee hat!

BERRY [*Laughs*] Okay, Spike. I'm staying neutral in Boston.

LEE I hope to see you soon. You know I'll always love you.

BERRY Aw, thanks. You know I love you, forever and ever. ●

LEE: MIKE MARSLAND/WIREIMAGE; BERRY: ALBERTO E. RODRIGUEZ/GETTY IMAGES FOR CINEMACON; *JUNGLE FEVER*: PHOTOFEST

BEN & Sincerely, KAITLYN

WITH BROADWAY SMASH *Dear Evan Hansen* GRADUATING TO THE BIG SCREEN, STARS BEN PLATT AND KAITLYN DEVER ARE HEADING BACK TO HIGH SCHOOL

BY **DEVAN COGGAN** @DEVANCOGGAN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **POONEH GHANA**

BEN PLATT AND KAITLYN DEVER DID A LOT OF crying on the set of *Dear Evan Hansen*. The film version of the hit Broadway musical (out Sept. 24) is an operatic whirlwind of emotion, with Platt reprising his Tony-winning role as Evan, the nervous, blue-polo-wearing teenager with a broken arm. When his classmate Connor Murphy (Colton Ryan) dies by suicide, Evan tells a well-intentioned fib that soon grows into a web of lies that brings him closer to Connor's sister Zoe (Dever). Platt, 27, and Dever, 24, had to navigate a tonal tightrope of romance, betrayal, and anxiety—as well as the difficult task of singing while sobbing. (Fortunately, they bonded off screen by quarantining together while filming last fall and connecting over their shared friendship with Dever's *Booksmart* costar Beanie Feldstein.) Here, the two actors break down *Evan*'s path from stage to screen.

Ben, you originated the role of Evan, starting with early readings in 2014 and ending with your final Broadway performance in 2017. Did you have any hesitation about tackling it again?

BEN PLATT Certainly. I think I was very scared to reenter the world of *Dear Evan Hansen*, for a myriad of reasons. Obviously, on a personal level, it's painful material. It's a vulnerable place to go emotionally. I did it for many years on Broadway and sort of put that chapter to bed, so it was a scary thought to reopen that. But the idea of the sheer number of people that would see [a film] was enough to assuage those fears and sell me on the idea. It was a combination of the idea of immortalizing the performance and having it to show my children and their children someday—and then also just how many young people will be able to be seen by it and hopefully moved by it.

Kaitlyn, what was it about Zoe that you connected with?

KAITLYN DEVER I saw *Dear Evan Hansen* about three years ago with my mom on Broadway. Of course, I wish I could've seen [Ben's] performance, but I [eventually] got to see it three feet away from his face, so that's fine. [*Laughs*] What really struck me when I saw Zoe on Broadway was her resilience and her strength. And I was so excited to be able to sing for the first time and work with Ben.

When did plans for a movie start to take shape?

PLATT There was sort of a collective realization that in terms of being able to make the movie with me, we're running out of time. I think everybody was really interested in only making that version of the film, which I really appreciate. It was sort of a sink-or-swim, now-or-never kind of vibe. I think everybody knew this could really have the potential to be something special and was worth running against the clock to do, even in the midst of a pandemic.

DEVER We actually talked a lot about this when we were shooting. We're making a movie about characters feeling isolated—while in the middle of pandemic, where a lot of people are having this similar feeling of isolation. I hope this is a movie that is going to allow people to feel really seen in that way.

Are there any particular memories that stand out most from filming?

DEVER There was this one moment where we're singing "Only Us." We had done it all day, and we couldn't stop laughing. I've never squeezed someone's hand so hard.

PLATT We were so tired, and we couldn't stop laughing, but it was the point in the day where no one else thinks it's funny. Everyone else is like, "We want to go home."

DEVER I think they actually used the shot of us almost peeing our pants. [*Laughs*] But there was a beautiful moment at the end of the day, where we were singing not on camera, just for sound. I got a little emotional because it was our last time singing together.

PLATT For me, it was all about the fact that we watched *Love Island* U.K. every night when we got home.

How was quarantining together?

PLATT It just made it so much warmer and a more familial experience. It could have been a very isolated experience, which at times it was, but there was such a safe haven to come home to. My birthday was [during] shooting as well. I was working that day and she wasn't, and when I got home, she had cooked me this amazing breakfast-for-dinner meal for my birthday. There were balloons, and she got me this vintage T-shirt with Pikachu on it. It was like having my family waiting at home.

DEVER Some days he would come home and his face was so puffy from crying all day, and it was just so nice to embrace in a hug and go snuggle on the couch and watch Netflix.

The film makes some changes from the show: There are new story lines and music. What change were you most excited to explore?

PLATT For me, the most exciting change is the third act of the film. In the [stage] musical, there's very little closure once Evan confesses to the family. He doesn't have to repent in any real way. We get a sense that he is going to in the future, which obviously makes the musical work in the end, but we don't get to see really what that means. I don't want to give too much away, but there's a whole section in the film where Evan gets to come clean in a meaningful way and go to work to try to make some good. That was the part that really got me because it was new.

You don't necessarily think of movie musicals as being so intimate and serious. How did you find the right tone?

DEVER That was something that was really important to [director Stephen Chbosky]: portraying all of these emotions in a grounded way. It was about keeping it at a level where it never felt like we were pushing it.

PLATT Totally—more so than any musical movie I've ever seen. The texture of it stays really small and real, and it never becomes operatic or theatrical. It stays really close to the ground in a beautiful way.

Ben, you've obviously grown up since *Dear Evan Hansen* debuted on Broadway in 2016. How did you approach the physical parts of playing him for the movie?

PLATT Well, I wanted to get a little smaller because I always have seen Evan as a ganglier kid who doesn't necessarily have the safety to have a great appetite. I shaved my arms to try to give a little more of a teen vibe. I shaved my face like three times a day because I'm a Jew and my hair grows really fast on my face. [*Laughs*] And I grew my hair out and let it be as Jew curly as it wants to be. I just wanted to do everything in my power to feel like him.

↓ Ben Platt performing in *Dear Evan Hansen* on Broadway

Julianne Moore plays Evan's mom, and Amy Adams plays Zoe's mom. How was working with those two?

PLATT Julianne Moore was amazing and just so warm. She jumped right in and made me feel that we had known each other for a really long time.

DEVER Amy is truly such a light on set. She literally just felt like my mom. And getting to watch Amy Adams, it's like a full-on master class.

PLATT We were shooting in the beautiful Murphy house, and I heard all this singing coming from downstairs in the dining room. I walked downstairs, and Kaitlyn and Amy were walking around the dining-room table, singing something together. It was like Karen Carpenter or something.

DEVER I think it was. Amy Adams does love a good karaoke moment.

Ben, did you immediately slip back into Evan's head when you put on that blue polo and cast, or did it take some adjusting?

PLATT I feel like that came pretty easily, just because I have sort of created that character for many years, so the essence of it feels very accessible.

DEVER And you wore your original Evan shoes.

PLATT I did! I wore my gray New Balance shoes that I wore every performance, eight times a week, for all of *Evan Hansen* for the D.C. production, for the Off Broadway production, and for the Broadway production. They are barely holding together. [*Laughs*] ●

↑ They will be found: Evan (Platt) and Zoe (Kaitlyn Dever) connect

DEAR EVAN HANSEN ON BROADWAY: MATTHEW MURPHY; *DEAR EVAN HANSEN* THE FILM: ERIKA DOSS/UNIVERSAL PICTURES

ANATOMY OF A SONG

"THE ANONYMOUS ONES"

Amandla Stenberg's original song in *Dear Evan Hansen* is top secret, but EW got the actress to open up about the parts she can tell

BY MAUREEN LEE LENKER

It's hard to imagine Amandla Stenberg—who's played tenacious characters in The Hunger Games, Everything, Everything, *and* The Hate U Give*—being easily intimidated. But the actress and musician was pretty nervous about writing a song for a film based on a Tony-winning Broadway musical. "You have a responsibility to ensure you're telling this coherent story line," she says about "The Anonymous Ones," the song she helped pen for her* Dear Evan Hansen *character, Alana Beck. "Every single line needs to penetrate an idea and another point in the story, which was a way I had never worked before."*

BEHIND THE MUSIC

An activist, violinist, and member of the folk-rock duo Honeywater twice named one of *Time*'s Most Influential Teens, Stenberg, 22, is fascinated by the parts of themselves people keep hidden, an ongoing theme in the film and her song. Says the actress: "The facade people present and the moment after they smile, what is behind that look?"

VIRTUAL REALITY

Stenberg collaborated with composers Benj Pasek and Justin Paul over delirious late-night Zoom sessions. "There were nights triumphantly reading our verses and other nights banging [our] heads to get something more," she says. The trio came in with a baseline chord progression then experimented with melody, structure, and lyrics.

FINDING HER VOICE

Ultimately, Stenberg ended up unlocking her character through the songwriting, finding resonance in Paul's chorus: "The parts we can't tell, we carry them well/But that doesn't mean they're not heavy," a.k.a. the MO of perfectionist Alana. "We'd been having these conversations about the things we don't show people, that we feel we have to go through alone, and the weight of that," reflects Stenberg. "The funny thing about songwriting is you're like, 'I'm just writing this about some random person,' and then you're like, 'Oh wait, this is totally about me.'"

BREAKING BIG

NIK DODANI

WHY YOU KNOW HIM

The actor, 27, has steadily earned laughs as an in-the-know social media director on CBS' *Murphy Brown* revival and a crass Casanova on Netflix's *Atypical*.

WHY YOU WILL KNOW HIM

Dodani steals scenes in *Dear Evan Hansen* as Jared, Evan's sarcastic "family friend"—which, Jared stresses, is "different from a regular friend."

Nik Dodani is always sincerely himself. On stage, his *Evan Hansen* character was portrayed as straight and Jewish, but Dodani requested that Jared's surname change from Kleinman to something Indian (it's now Kalwani). And after a stand-up set on *The Late Show With Stephen Colbert* in which the comic discussed his sexuality, screenwriter Steven Levenson suggested making the character openly gay, too. Dodani agreed, only after discussing what precisely that entailed. "I wanted to make sure it was done properly and not just some random joke thrown in," says the actor, writer, and comedian, who is dedicated to reflecting his identity on screen. He co-founded the Salon, a forum for South Asian artists and executives, and he's writing an adaptation of *Blue Boy*, Rakesh Satyal's coming-of-age novel. "I want to tell stories that are very brown and very queer," he says. "I want to create this whole ecosystem of incredible talent and projects that center us and are made by and for us." —MLL

DEAR EVAN HANSEN: ERIKA DOSS/UNIVERSAL PICTURES; DODANI: GETTY IMAGES FOR GLAAD

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PARTNERS IN TRUE CRIME

STEVE MARTIN, SELENA GOMEZ, AND MARTIN SHORT ARE ALL OVER THE CASE ON HULU'S NEW MYSTERY SERIES *ONLY MURDERS IN THE BUILDING*

BY DAN SNIERSON
@DANSNIERSON

STEVE MARTIN AND MARTIN SHORT HAVE CONQUERED

the comedy world together and apart. Now, with the help of an unlikely cohort and an offbeat Manhattan murder mystery, they might bridge the generation gap, too. Two-thirds of the Three Amigos have teamed up with Disney Channel standout–turned–global pop star Selena Gomez to headline *Only Murders in the Building*. Debuting Aug. 31 on Hulu, the sly, star-jammed whodunit follows lonely former TV detective Charles (Martin, 76), insolvent desperate director Oliver (Short, 71), and aloof aspiring artist Mabel (Gomez, 29), who bond over their shared love of a true-crime podcast and wind up not only investigating a death in their Upper West Side co-op, but recording a podcast about it. The twisty ride also involves a New York deli king, the Hardy Boys, something called Gut Milk, frozen cats, and, sure, Sting. EW rounded up the three stars/executive producers for a revealing off-the-books interrogation.

You know why you're here and what you did. You've made a promising and dangerous comedy—

STEVE MARTIN Comedy-*drama*? What would you call it?

SELENA GOMEZ I'd say a dramedy.

MARTIN SHORT Could be *shtomedy*, which is comedy with lots of shtick in it. Or...*shtragedy*...

MARTIN Marty, keep going!

Steve, as the mastermind of this operation, how did you come to co-create *Murders*?

MARTIN I came to create the *idea*. John Hoffman wrote the script. I wrote the first three or four pages to [start] it off. Five or six or seven years ago, I was at a party with a good friend of ours, [the late] Sandy Gallin. There were three older actors there. Joel Grey, Bob Balaban...

SHORT And Ron Rifkin...

MARTIN Sandy Gallin says, "You ought to write something for these guys." I said, "Gee, that is a really good idea. They'd live in a building..." I evolved this over the next couple of months: "They're too old to want to leave the building, so they limit it to [investigating] murders that happened in the building." But I never did anything with it. But every once in a while in show business, your agent will call you and say, "You should have lunch with Wes Anderson. He really likes you." And as soon as you have lunch with Wes Anderson, Wes Anderson is so over you that you never work with Wes Anderson. And I've always liked Wes Anderson.

HELLO, DOLLY!

Upon hearing Martin play his song "Pretty Flowers," Gallin—Dolly Parton's friend and previous manager—suggested to him that she sing it. Parton does, on Martin's 2009 album, *The Crow: New Songs for the Five-String Banjo*.

SHORT Well, you know what it was? He expected you...

MARTIN ...to be funny?

SHORT To be more upbeat. [*Imitates sad sack Martin*] "It's the beginning of winter. That means a long time till spring." He said, "Get me the check and get out of this."

MARTIN [*Imitating Short's impression of him*] "You'd probably never cast me in one of your movies."

GOMEZ By the way, this [*motions to them*] is all I did for seven months. [*They laugh.*]

MARTIN So they called and said, "You should have lunch with [eventual *Murders* exec producers] Dan Fogelman and Jess Rosenthal." So I go to this outdoor lunch. I tell them the Wes Anderson story. They said, "No, we'll just have fun!" We have a nice time. I said, "You know, I do have this one idea," and I pitched it. And I could see their eyes go *hmmm!*, a little wider. And then a year and a half later, we finished shooting.

One of the appealing things about this series is its triumvirate of stars. Two of you have a long history and friendship in comedy...

SHORT I remember when we first met on *Three Amigos!* First thing he ever said to me was, "Did I ever tell you my Wes Anderson story?" [*They laugh.*]

...and the other is a huge pop star. Selena, you've starred in comedies, but what was it like to enter the orbit of these two? How did it meet or subvert expectations?

GOMEZ I met with everybody on a Zoom and I told them that I have this morbid fascination with crime/murder shows, podcasts. I was very, very nervous at first. [*To Martin and Short*] I don't even think you guys really know that.

SHORT Not remotely.

← Pod help them: Selena Gomez, Steve Martin, and Martin Short

GOMEZ I watch the first episode and think, “Wow, I felt so meek and new.” And now I feel more open to just saying whatever.

MARTIN Well, there was a shift during shooting. But I think you’re fantastic in the first episode. It’s that thing of acting where some people can just do nothing and there’s something on their face that’s happening. [*Points to own face*] Yes. [*Points to Gomez’s face*] Yes. [*Points to Short’s face*] No.

GOMEZ It was such a blast, and I realized I am in a time in my life I will never forget, working with these legends. They have taught me so much and make me laugh constantly. They have a sense of humor that’s just classic—I feel like it doesn’t exist anymore.

SHORT Oh, that’s nice.

MARTIN Do you wish it had been Ron Rifkin and Joel Grey?

Steve and Marty, what do you remember about meeting Selena?

MARTIN I remember backstage in the makeup, thinking, “Oh! We’re going to meet Selena!” When you meet somebody, especially a pop star, you have no idea. [*To Gomez*] Well, we really liked you on Zoom. We talked after, and [Short] said, “She is perfect.” We were comfortable within hours, I’d say.

SHORT Whatever you were feeling, you masked it perfectly. You seemed totally friendly, lovely, open, in the moment, excited—you carried nothing other than that. We all just laughed and liked and trusted each other. We shot in a restaurant, and Steve kept pretending to send texts to [Hulu parent company] Disney about how it was going, and that he would get texts from Disney saying, “Yeah, can you tell Marty to calm it down a little?” And you said, “I’ve been getting those since I was 7!”

GOMEZ No, I said, “Disney can own my firstborn child.”

How would you sum up the dynamic of your three characters?

MARTIN My favorite moments in the scripts are when Marty and I say something commensurate with our age and Selena will go, “No, no, we don’t say that. None of that.” And we go, “Oh, okay.”

SHORT There’s a great exchange when we’re texting her, and Steve and I are trying to figure out: “Do we phone her? Do we write her?” [*To Martin*] And you say, “Maybe text. Phone calls seem to upset them.”

GOMEZ That sums it up. What I enjoy about the characters coming together is there’s this sense of we’re all alone in our own worlds…

MARTIN I was just thinking that.

GOMEZ We share that bond of being lonely. Our characters have their own story, but what brings them together is they’re lonely people.

Selena, you went to CrimeCon, where an unsolved murder investigation was crowdsourced and you helped try to crack it…

MARTIN What’s CrimeCon?

GOMEZ It’s been around for a bit. There’s a case that’s actually open…

MARTIN You mean it’s a TV show?

GOMEZ No, no, it’s just an event. You get to meet the forensics…

SHORT Did you do this recently?

GOMEZ No, this was before the show. It was fascinating, we’d get the forensics, we got all of it…

MARTIN It’s a real crime? Wow.

GOMEZ We met their family and

CRIMINAL-MINDED

CrimeCon is an annual multiday event for true-crime fanatics, creators, and experts. The first CrimeCon was held in Indianapolis in 2017.

↓ Short’s Oliver (over-)directs Martin’s Charles on their dangerous new podcast

PREVIOUS SPREAD: HULU; THIS SPREAD: *ONLY MURDERS IN THE BUILDING*: HULU (2)

they can't find the murderer, but we get to help as much as we can.

SHORT You were into true crime even *before* this project? Wow.

GOMEZ *The First 48*. I grew up with...

MARTIN *First 48* is really good. I was into *Forensic Files*. It's not about the personality of the victim. It's about DNA and the dog hair under the mattress, and searching down the tread mark in thousands of tires. I listen to *Casefile*. It's from Australia, and it's very good. When I was home last summer, I'd go on my bike rides and listen to *Casefile,* and I realized I went through 180 of them.

GOMEZ My God. [I'm listening to] these two girls...what's their name?

MARTIN Oh, I know who they are. *Crime Junkie*?

GOMEZ Yes!

Marty, did you also have interest in true-crime podcasts, or was this on-the-job education for you?

SHORT No interest. [*Martin laughs.*] As a kid, I sure liked *Perry Mason*.

This show features such guest stars as Tina Fey, Nathan Lane, Amy Ryan, and Sting as Sting. Sting doesn't do a lot of comedies.

MARTIN Yeah, I know! And he sang! I was holding the camera, trying to video him.

SHORT He was phenomenal.

MARTIN He played very, very straight—and a little tough.

JUNKIE FIX

Hosted by Ashley Flowers and Brit Prawat, this true-crime podcast explores murder and missing-persons cases—and was the subject of a plagiarism controversy in 2019.

SHORT You know what he did, which was great? [In one episode] he sings a song that he makes up. Well, when we were doing our coverage over his shoulder, every time in that moment, he'd stand up, he wouldn't do the song in the script. He'd go [*imitates Sting singing*], "Roxaaaanne!" Or he'd do: "Every move you make..." He'd do one of his massive hits, every take.

GOMEZ It was surreal being on set.

Which of you three would make the best investigator?

GOMEZ Me. Because I've had the gift of social media, unfortunately.

MARTIN Also, you're willing to leave the house. We're too tired to leave the house.

SHORT Don't lump me in with your sore back!

Now that you've jelled as a trio, what's your dream project?

MARTIN *Three Amigos!*

GOMEZ A dream would be to do some comedy sketches.

MARTIN What's the standard life for something like this? Three, four years? Some are six years. We'll be like [*moans geriatrically*]...

GOMEZ Oh my gosh, I'm going to be 30! [*They laugh.*]

MARTIN I can't think of anything more dreamful than this [show].

SHORT A remake of *A Room With a View*. Obviously, she can play Helena Bonham Carter, and we play dueling Maggie Smith characters.

We may need to bring you in for further questioning, so don't leave town. Let me pretend to turn off my recorder and then ask: What's the biggest crime you've gotten away with in real life?

MARTIN My career? [*They laugh.*]

GOMEZ What's dangerous about being so young and exposed to so much, you're actually getting away with things that you shouldn't. I mean, people would offer you wine and you're going to parties...

SHORT Yeah, but that's their crime, not yours.

MARTIN If she took it...

SHORT If you're 9.

GOMEZ Well, I wasn't 9! When I was younger, I stole ChapStick and we got home and I told my mom and she made me go back to the store and apologize.

SHORT That's a good mom... I went through a phase—I'm not proud of it—I'd occasionally lift a bathrobe from a hotel if I liked it, knowing they were going to put it on my bill. I'd put it in my suitcase...

MARTIN There's an old joke: "The towels in that hotel were so fabulous, I could hardly close my suitcase!" ●

HULU (3)

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Levitating (feat. DaBaby)

TIKTOK BOOM

The app redefined what it means to break as a musician. But could a host of new challenges threaten its dominance? • By **Rachel Yang** @_rachelyang • Illustration by **Robert Sammelin**

BEFORE PURSUING MUSIC FULL-time, John Roseboro was a mortician. This past April he started sharing his songs on TikTok. "It's the best way to reach an organic audience," the 26-year-old says from his home outside Atlanta, where he lives with his wife and toddler son. Since his first video, where he played his self-described "post–bossa nova" sound on guitar, he's added more than 43,000 followers and attracted nearly a half-million likes.

Roseboro's story isn't a fluke. Many artists have found similar success stories on the app. Since its founding in 2016, TikTok has become a behemoth, with 689 million monthly active users. It recently became the first non-Facebook app to hit 3 billion downloads globally. So it should be no surprise that it's also captured a special hold on the music industry, as both an indispensable tool for new singers to share their music and a fertile ground for labels to find undiscovered talent. It's also served as a launching pad for stars like Lil Nas X and Megan Thee Stallion, and revived careers of established singers like Jason Derulo.

"You're able to carve out a niche and build authentic audiences without a huge barrier to entry," says United Talent Agency's Scarlett Perlman, who works with musicians and TikTok stars Charly Jordan and Asher Angel. "We're signing folks that maybe went to bed one night, woke up, and saw that their video had millions of views."

Adds Devon Vonder Schmalz, who posts music analyses on the account @songpsych and her original songs via @dev_lemons: "TikTok's put the industry on their toes because it's so unpredictable. *Anything* can blow up." Case in point: Songs from the animated kids' show *The Backyardigans* hit the Spotify Viral 50 chart in May after TikTokers used them to soundtrack their comedy videos.

But even with new artists racking up views, not all musicians on TikTok feel as confident about the platform's future. An increasing number of users, especially Black creators, are voicing concerns about unfair treatment on the app. And as we enter a shaky post-pandemic period where we're no longer (as) glued to our phones, it remains to be seen if TikTok's impact on music is as sustainable, positive, or democratic as it claims to be.

TIKTOK MADE HEADLINES NONSTOP IN 2020 and early 2021 thanks to a quarantine-inspired boom of shut-in users flocking to the app, its ability to regularly launch songs onto the *Billboard* charts, and its high-profile licensing agreements with Universal, Warner, and Sony. Popularity aside, complaints have come from some of its most visible users. In interviews with more than a dozen artists and music curators on TikTok, gripes mostly centered on the app's mysterious algorithm—long considered its best *and* worst part. The algorithm's machinations are opaque, except that it manifests as highly customized feeds (or "For You" pages), prioritizing topical content as much as videos from people whom users follow.

"It's easy for someone with two followers to get hundreds of likes," says Max Motley (@mostleymusic), a user who recommends and reviews music. And thanks to the algorithm, that rise can happen fast. "I've seen artists go from 10,000 followers to a major record-label deal within the space of two or three or four months," says Ananmay Sharan, a student behind the popular music account @loveinamovie.

This inexact science forces artists such as Tai Verdes—whose song "Stuck in the Middle" blew up on TikTok and helped him sign a deal with Arista—to take a more methodical approach. Verdes boosted his profile in the beginning by offering TikTokers money to promote another one of his songs. At times he sounds more like a businessman, speaking about "data points" and "product." The key, he says, is "getting a commodity that not everyone else has, which is yourself and your art." That means his music and his persona are one and the same. “Stuck in the Middle,” for instance, has a sunny, radio-friendly vibe, but its narrative about being a lover who is hurting serves his brand of vulnerability.

Of course, it’s not always that cut-and-dried, which matters when the amount of time you put in to create a new post doesn’t result in a substantial payoff. For Damoyee Neroes (@damoyee)—known for creative, multi-frame videos of herself singing—it can take up to six and a half hours not only to come up with an idea but then record, mix, master, and edit it, all by herself. Similarly, Sharan’s channel, where he recommends and discusses indie music, has posts that can take three to four hours to edit. None of these artists get paid unless they opt for sponsored content or join TikTok’s Creator Fund, which pays little. While there *is* money involved in record deals—Roseboro, who’s releasing his album *Human Nature* Sept. 17, is considering signing to an indie label so he “can actually provide for” his wife and son—many artists are wary of handing over their creative freedom for short-term financial gain.

“It is really hard when money is your main motivation,” says Sabrina Seidman, a singer-songwriter who also teaches producing on TikTok (@seids), and has been burned enough times by bad contracts that she now prioritizes her happiness over everything. “[I want] to create freely, and if I don’t get that, then it’s just not worth it.”

AS MUSICIANS ON TIKTOK FEEL THE financial and emotional squeeze of posting regularly, they’ve turned to other streams of revenue. Some engage in “pay for play,” accepting money to promote different artists; some do brand deals—though are careful not to do so many that they’re accused of selling out by their vigilant online fan bases.

Then there are those artists who balk at the pressure to share too much of their personal lives in the name of promotion. Take Jack Rutter, better known as Ritt Momney, who gained traction in 2020 after his cover of Corinne Bailey Rae’s “Put Your Records On” went viral on TikTok. As he grows his original-music career, he is looking to distance himself from the platform that expanded his popularity. He’s torn, though. “When you’re trying to book a show, they look at your Spotify numbers and your Instagram followers,” he says. “Part of me is like, ‘Am I just being an idiot about this? Should I just shut up and promote myself?’ ”

While TikTok, in theory, seems like a way of democratizing music, its mainstream success has also brought attention to a perception of inequality on the platform. Brad Osborn, a professor of music theory at the University of Kansas, sees a worrying level of exploitation when white TikTok stars like Addison Rae get “famous dancing or lip-synching to music that was created by a Black or another [minority] artist” without credit.

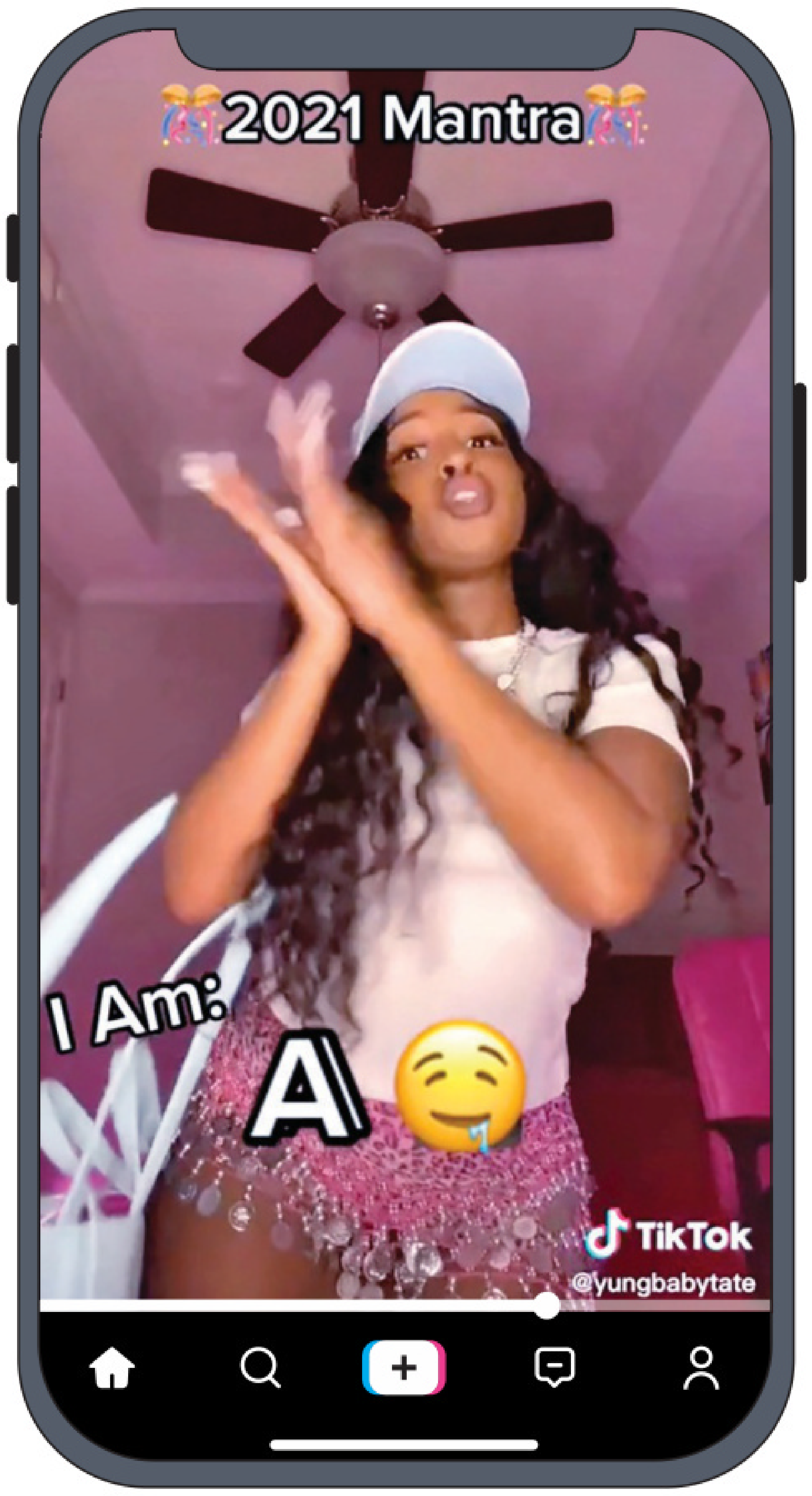
In June, Black dancers on the platform went on strike over this very issue after refusing to choreograph Megan Thee Stallion’s single “Thot Shit” as fodder for white TikTokers. The situation has since opened up wider conversations about appropriation and ownership on the app. And though some Black dancers have returned to TikTok, the next big reckoning could lead to a more permanent break. (Representatives for TikTok declined to comment on the strike.)

A number of Black musicians tell EW they hope the strike eventually extends to their communities on the app. “Personally, I’ve seen fewer Black music creators on my ‘For You’ page than what I’ve encountered in the past,” says Neroes. “TikTok should definitely find a way to boost so many talented—not just Black artists—independent artists.”

People are split on why the algorithm supposedly seems to suppress Black and often queer voices. Rapper Yung Baby Tate, whose song “I Am” has been used in over 325,000 TikTok videos, says the algorithm is “inherently racist,” while music and culture commentator Laura Lisbon

TikTok
@taiverdes

↑ “People want to be entertained by what others are going through,” says singer/TikTok favorite Tai Verdes



↑ Though TikTok helped her reach a new level of fame, Yung Baby Tate is critical of the platform’s inequality

(@cyberexboyfriend) says he believes the algorithm simply reinforces people's "inherent racial bias." A spokesperson for the company directed EW to a statement that notes "racism and discrimination have no place on TikTok and we're committed to specific, concrete actions in our push toward building an inclusive platform reflective of our diverse world." Those initiatives include TikTok live events, such as a 12-week Black Creatives accelerator program where Black users participated in master classes on topics like brand building. Neroes, who was part of the inaugural event, says it was a "great experience."

↓ Jack Rutter, who performs as Ritt Momney, struck TikTok gold with his cover of Corinne Bailey Rae's "Put Your Records On," but he's conflicted about sharing more of his personal life on the app

COREY SHERIDAN, TIKTOK'S HEAD of music partnerships and content operations for North America, tells EW that 2021 is all about "doubling down" on existing strategies: livestreaming; getting "legacy artists" like Cher and Barry Manilow, who've recently joined the app, to attract older users and introduce their catalogs to younger ones; and possibly throwing the company's own music festival.

"Right now, I'm not feeling TikTok. The platform as a whole is just kind of racist, honestly."

Yung Baby Tate

Still, despite its growing ambitions and influence, TikTok may stop short of fully disrupting the music business. The company's recent global agreement with the three major labels shows it still relies on traditional industry giants for powerful partnerships. And as smaller artists struggle to find ways to monetize their work, some could turn into full-blown influencers for whom music becomes a small part of their overall branding—or find themselves jaded by the platform entirely. Others may simply see TikTok as nothing more than a pit stop on the road to success on more traditional platforms.

Take Yung Baby Tate, who has been posting fewer videos to the app as she's about to star on *Love & Hip Hop Atlanta*'s new season. She now views TikTok as a "stepping-stone" to bigger things. Meanwhile, producer L.Dre—whose TikTok-viral remixes of music from cartoons like *Avatar: The Last Airbender* boosted his Spotify streams—is putting more of a focus on writing music for TV. And then there are music curators, such as Motley and Sharan, who've landed gigs at labels. They may become gatekeepers themselves, albeit with more awareness of elitism in a system that kept them out in the first place.

Verdes is one user who doesn't plan to abandon the app anytime soon. He says that if he can pivot from job to job, he can adapt to whatever TikTok—or the next platform that comes after it—throws his way. "There's 100,000 people in the world that are better than me at singing," he says, "but there's not 100,000 people in the world that are better than me at marketing. I'm gonna use that to my advantage in every single way."

↑ Derulaissance: Singer Jason Derulo's unique approach to TikTok has helped resurrect his career

As for Roseboro, he's going to stick around even though he thinks the app will continue to devolve. "Companies will start to make ads that look like they were created by a user," he says. "Or maybe everybody gets bought by Amazon and 'this video is sponsored by Squarespace.' " Notwithstanding his dire prediction, Roseboro says he clings to the belief "If you make good stuff, it'll make it to the people." ●

PRI

Zoë Robins, Barney Harris, Daniel Henney, Rosamund Pike, Madeleine Madden, Marcus Rutherford, and Josha Stradowski

TIM

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AN **EXCLUSIVE** FIRST LOOK AT ***THE WHEEL OF TIME***, AMAZON PRIME VIDEO'S UPCOMING ADAPTATION OF ROBERT JORDAN'S EPIC FANTASY NOVELS

E

BY CHRISTIAN HOLUB
@CMHOLUB

I

IT'S BEEN TWO YEARS SINCE *GAME of Thrones* went off the air, and even longer since Amazon chief Jeff Bezos directed his Prime Video team to deliver him a hit akin to the HBO supernova. Into this vacuum steps *The Wheel of Time*, a new drama (coming November) adapted from author Robert Jordan's bestselling series of the same name.

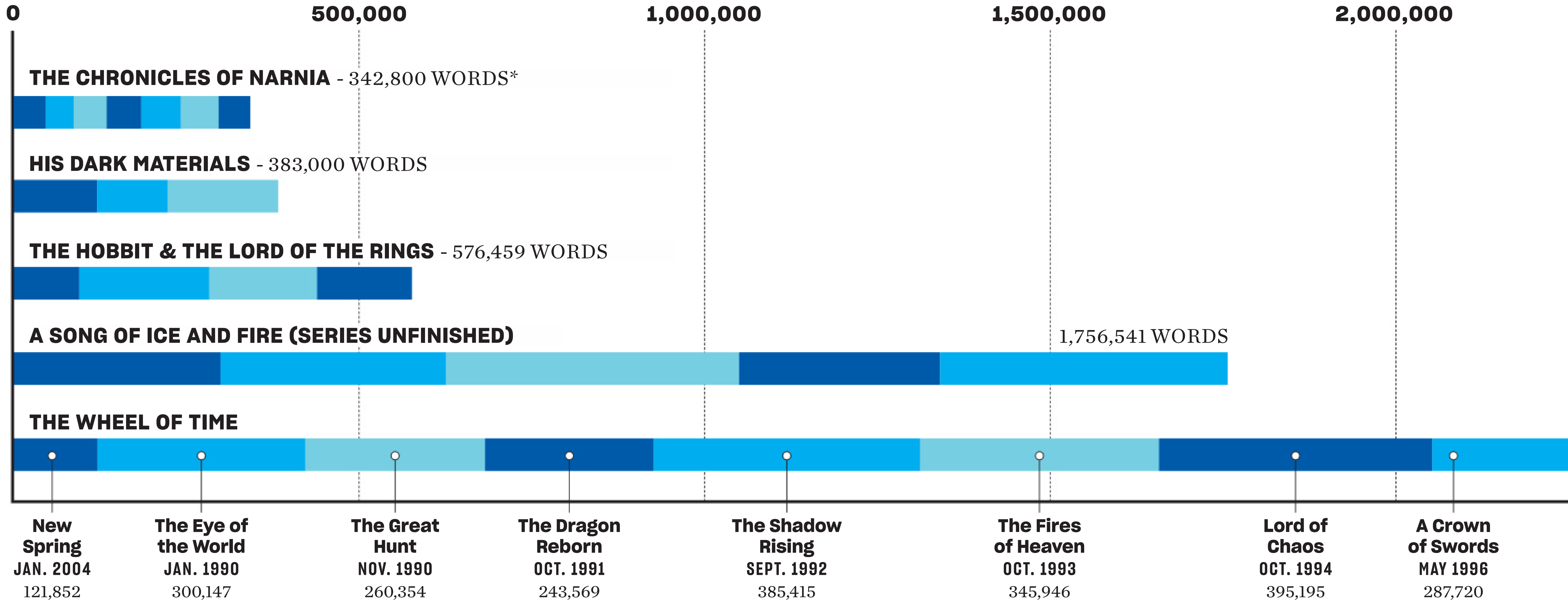
Spanning a whopping 15 novels, *The Wheel of Time*—which debuted in 1990—seemed impossible to adapt before shows like *Thrones*. But while George R.R. Martin's epic beat Jordan's opus to televisions, showrunner Rafe Judkins believes *WoT* serves as a perfect bridge between *Thrones* and the earlier mythic saga *The Lord of the Rings* (another literary world getting a show at Amazon). "*Wheel of Time* is the first fantasy series that really dove into the political and cultural worlds of all these different characters," Judkins (a former *Survivor* contestant and *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* producer) says of the insanely popular and lengthy books. "It was also one of the first to dive into multiple POV characters, so you're following an ensemble, with each of them having their own agendas and approaches to everything. That's always felt to me like the missing piece of the fantasy-literature landscape that hasn't been brought to TV or film yet."

The Wheel of Time also differentiates itself from those other big-name franchises in the way it highlights its female characters. While Middle-earth's most prominent heroine has to disguise herself as a man, and Westeros' few female conquerors are often facing threats of sexual violence, the world of *WoT* is essentially matriarchal. The largest kingdom in the novels' unnamed land is ruled by a queen who will pass her crown to her daughter rather than her son, and uneasy peace is maintained by the female-only mystic order known as the Aes Sedai. "These are not just a bunch of princesses swanning around in pretty dresses," says series costume

(PREVIOUS SPREAD AND THIS SPREAD) JAN THIJS/AMAZON STUDIOS (2)

WHAT'S THE WORD (COUNT)?

How the sizable *Wheel of Time* stacks up against other fantasy series. *Reporting by Calie Schepp*



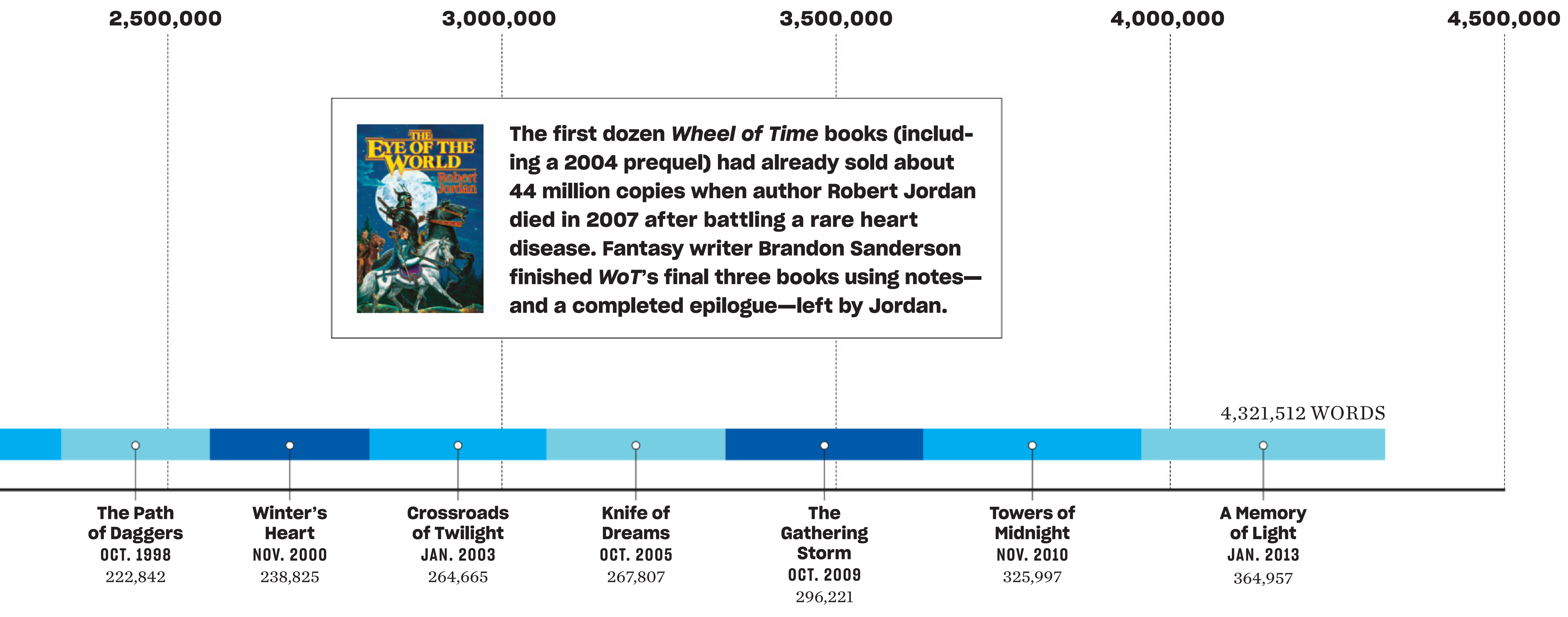
*ESTIMATION PROVIDED BY *NARNIA* PUBLISHER HARPERCOLLINS

↑ Moiraine (Rosamund Pike) enters Shadar Logoth with her bodyguard (or "Warder"), Lan (Daniel Henney)

designer Isis Mussenden. "These are women doing jobs. They're taking care of the governance, they're taking care of healing."

The Wheel of Time's most prominent Aes Sedai is Moiraine (Rosamund Pike), who rescues a handful of young villagers after monsters attack their community of Two Rivers. Though the group of new refugees doesn't trust her, "Moiraine is the guide figure in this world," explains Pike, "the mysterious stranger who comes to town and changes their lives forever. They leave with her on a journey that will either save or destroy humanity."

As a member of the Aes Sedai, Moiraine is a master at channeling a magical force called the One Power. Lifetimes earlier, both men and women were able to access the magic, but an evil known as the Dark One tainted the male half. Now any man capable of mysticism is hunted by the Aes Sedai and stripped of his abilities (a process that can turn fatal). "If, hypothetically, one of our male characters were able to use the One Power, they understand the stakes of it," says Judkins, offering a scenario that's a bit more than a hypothetical. If *WoT* sticks to the



The first dozen *Wheel of Time* books (including a 2004 prequel) had already sold about 44 million copies when author Robert Jordan died in 2007 after battling a rare heart disease. Fantasy writer Brandon Sanderson finished *WoT*'s final three books using notes—and a completed epilogue—left by Jordan.

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↑ After channeling the One Power, Logain (Álvaro Morte) is captured by Alanna (Priyanka Bose) and Kerene (Clare Perkins)

← Egwene (Madeleine Madden) and Rand (Josha Stradowski)

plot of Jordan's books, Moiraine encourages her new female travel companions, Egwene (Madeleine Madden) and Nynaeve (Zoë Robins), to embrace their mystic potential. But she also suspects that one of their male cohorts may unknowingly possess "the spark" and be linked to the long-lost messiah known as the Dragon. She's just not sure if it's Rand (Josha Stradowski), Mat (Barney Harris), or Perrin (Marcus Rutherford)...

While shooting in Eastern Europe over the past two years (pausing for a significant hiatus due to COVID-19), Judkins and his team felt the pressure to get Jordan's story "right"—and spared no expense crafting a world they hope is embraced by the millions of rabid *WoT* fans. "We literally built Shadar Logoth from scratch just for 15 minutes of airtime, because it's that important to the series," Judkins says of the infamous abandoned city, which is haunted by such dark energy that even the monstrous Trollocs hunting our protagonists fear to tread there. "That's where it becomes very clear it's not just the forces of good and evil. There are lots of different angles."

Judkins hopes to explore all those angles as his drama expands beyond Jordan's first *WoT* book. It helps that Amazon has already commissioned a second season—and that an unrelated *WoT* prequel movie in the works is sure to boost name recognition—but Judkins knows he must bring in more than the existing die-hard fan base for any chance of his series lasting long enough to cover Jordan's epilogue. To accomplish that goal, he's relying on the author's celebrated world-building. "I try to stick to the spine and the heart of the books, and bring that to the screen," Judkins says of his philosophy as showrunner. "If I can successfully do that, the story and the characters will sell themselves." ●

JAN THIJS/AMAZON STUDIOS (2)

GAME. SET. MURDER?

EXCLUSIVE EXCERPT

LIANE MORIARTY'S NEXT NOVEL, ***APPLES NEVER FALL*** (OUT SEPT. 14), IS A HIGH-WIRE ACT THAT BLENDS MARITAL DRAMA, A LONG CON, A POTENTIAL MURDER—AND COMPETITIVE TENNIS

ILLUSTRATION BY **NIGEL BUCHANAN**

Everything Liane Moriarty touches turns to gold. Or rather, it becomes a best-selling book and a hit TV series (think: Big Little Lies*). The Australian author's next project, which is already destined for the small screen (see sidebar), is a throwback to her best-known—and most beloved—material: family secrets. In this excerpt from* Apples Never Fall*, you'll meet the Delaneys. They're a seemingly impeccable group of tennis-playing suburbanites, the envy of all their neighbors. There's just one small problem: Matriach Joy has gone missing, and her husband, Stan, looks all too plausible as the culprit.* —SEIJA RANKIN

TWO MEN AND TWO WOMEN SAT IN the far corner of a café underneath the framed photo of sunflowers at dawn in Tuscany. They were basketball-player tall, and as they leaned forward over the mosaic-topped round table, their foreheads almost touched. They spoke in low, intense voices, as if their conversation involved international espionage, which was incongruous in this small suburban café on a pleasant summery Saturday morning, with freshly baked banana and pear bread scenting the air and soft rock drifting languidly from the stereo to the accompaniment of the espresso machine's industrious hiss and grind.

"I think they're brothers and sisters," said the waitress to her boss. The waitress was an only child and intrigued by siblings. "They look really similar."

"They're taking too long to order," said her boss, who was one of eight and found siblings not at all intriguing. After last week's violent hailstorm, there had been blessed rain for nearly a week. Now the fires were under control, the smoke had cleared along with people's faces, and customers were finally out and about again, cash in hand, so they needed to be turning over tables fast.

"They said they haven't had a chance to look at the menus."

"Ask them again."

The waitress approached the table once more, noting how they each sat in the same distinctive way, with their ankles hooked around the front legs of their chairs, as if to prevent them from sliding away.

"Excuse me?"

They didn't hear her. They were all talking at once, their voices overlapping. They were definitely related. They even sounded similar: low, deep, husky-edged voices. People with sore throats and secrets.

"She's not technically missing. She sent us that text."

"I just can't believe she's not answering her phone. She always answers."

"Dad mentioned her new bike is gone."

"What? That's bizarre."

"So...she just cycled off down the street and into the sunset?"

"But she didn't take her helmet. Which I find very weird."

"I think it's time we reported her missing."

"It's over a week now. That's too long."

"Like I said, she's not technically—"

"She is the very definition of missing, because *we don't know where she is*."

The waitress raised her voice to a point that was perilously close to rude. "Are you ready to order yet?"

They didn't hear her.

"Has anyone been over to the house yet?"

"Dad told me please don't come over. He said he's 'very busy.' "

"Very *busy*? What's he so busy doing?"

The waitress shuffled alongside them, in between the chairs and the wall, so that one of them might see her.

"You know what could happen if we reported her missing?" The better-looking of the two men spoke. He wore a long-sleeved linen shirt rolled up to the elbows, shorts, and shoes without socks. He was in his early thirties, the waitress guessed, with a goatee and the low-level charismatic charm of a reality star or a real estate agent. "They'd suspect Dad."

"Suspect Dad of what?" asked the other man, a shabbier, chunkier, cheaper version of the first. Instead of a goatee, he just needed a shave. "That he...you know." The expensive-version brother drew his finger across his neck. The waitress went very still. This was the best conversation she'd overheard since she'd started waitressing.

"Jesus, Troy." The cheaper-version brother exhaled. "That's not funny."

The other man shrugged. "The police will ask if they argued. Dad said they *did* argue."

"But surely—"

"Maybe Dad did have something to do with it," said the youngest of the four, a woman wearing flip-flops and a short orange dress dotted with white daisies over a swimsuit tied at the neck. Her hair was dyed blue (the waitress coveted that exact shade), and it was tied back in a sticky, wet, tangled knot at her neck. There was a fine sheen of sandy sunscreen on her arms as if she'd just that moment walked off the beach, even though they were at least a forty-minute drive from the coast. "Maybe he snapped. Maybe he finally snapped."

"Stop it, both of you," said the other woman, who the waitress realized now was a regular: extra-large, extra-hot soy flat white. Her name was Brooke. Brooke with an *e*. They wrote customers' names on their coffee lids, and this woman had once pointed out, in a diffident but firm way, as if she couldn't help herself, that there should be an *e* at the end of her name.

She was polite but not chatty and generally just a little stressed, like she already knew the day wasn't going her way. She paid with a five-dollar note and always left the fifty-cent piece in the tip jar. She wore the same thing every day: a navy polo shirt, shorts, and sneakers with socks. Today she was dressed for the weekend, in a skirt and top, but she still had the look of an off-duty member of the armed forces, or a PE teacher who wouldn't fall for any of your excuses about cramps. "Dad would *never* hurt Mum," she said to her sister. "Never."

"Oh my God, of course he wouldn't. I'm not serious!" The blue-haired girl held up her hands, and the waitress saw the rumpled skin around her eyes and mouth and realized she wasn't young at all, she was just dressed young. She was a middle-aged person in disguise. From a distance you'd guess twenty; from close up, you'd think maybe forty. It felt like a trick.

"Mum and Dad have a really strong marriage," said Brooke with an *e*, and something about the resentfully deferential pitch of her voice made the waitress think that in spite of her sensible clothes, she might be the youngest of the four. The better-looking brother gave her a quizzical look. "Did we grow up in the same house?"

"I don't know. Did we? Because I never saw any signs of violence...I mean, *God*!"

"Anyway, I'm not the one suggesting it. I'm saying *other* people might suggest it."

The blue-haired woman looked up and caught sight of the waitress. "Sorry! We still haven't looked!" She picked up the laminated menu.

"That's okay," said the waitress. She wanted to hear more. "Also, we're all a bit distracted. Our mother is missing."

"Oh no. That's...worrying?" The waitress couldn't quite work out how to react. They didn't seem *that* worried. These people were, like, all a lot older than her—wouldn't their mother therefore be properly old? Like a little old lady? How did a little old lady go missing? Dementia?

Brooke with an *e* winced. She said to her sister, "Don't tell people that."

"I apologize. Our mother is *possibly* missing," amended the blue-haired woman. "We have temporarily mislaid our mother."

"You need to retrace your steps." The waitress went along with the joke. "Where did you see her last?"

There was an awkward pause. They all looked at her with identical liquid brown eyes and sober expressions. They all had the sort of eyelashes that were so dark they looked like they were wearing eyeliner.

"You know, you're right. That's exactly what we need to do." The blue-haired woman nodded slowly as if she were taking the flippant remark seriously. "Retrace our steps."

"We'll all try the apple crumble with cream," interrupted the expensive-version brother. "And then we'll let you know what we think."

"Good one." The cheaper-version brother tapped the edge of his menu on the side of the table.

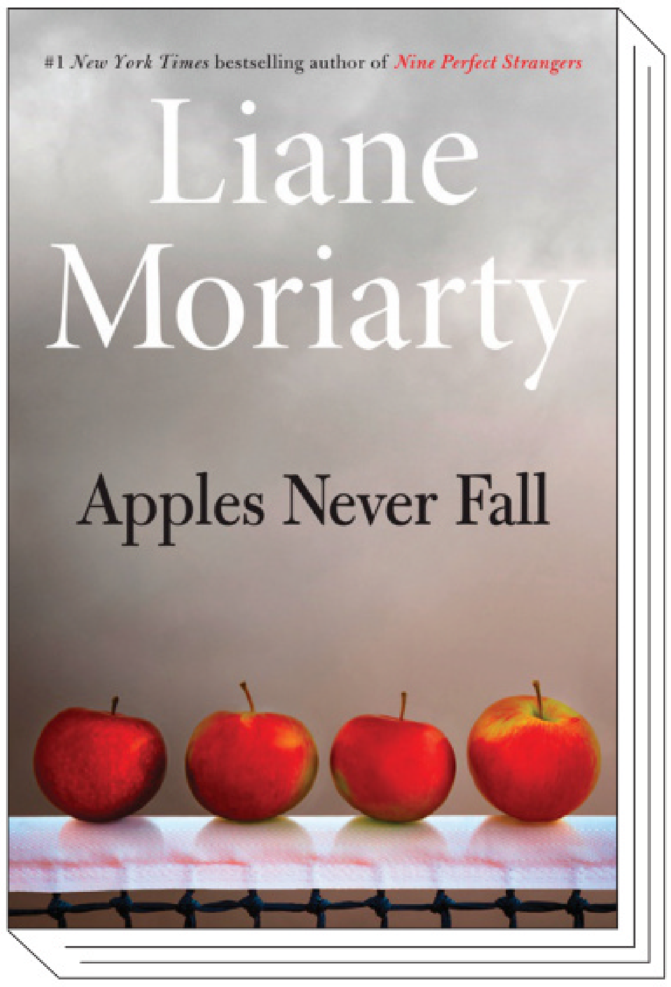
"For breakfast?" said Brooke, but she smiled wryly as if at some private joke related to apple crumble, and they all handed over their menus in the relieved, "that's sorted, then" way that people handed back menus, glad to be rid of them.

The waitress wrote *4 x App Crum* on her notepad, and straightened the pile of menus.

"Listen," said the cheaper-version brother. "Has anyone called *her*?"

"Coffees?" asked the waitress.

"We'll all have long blacks," said the expensive-version brother, and the waitress made eye contact with Brooke with an *e* to give her the chance to say, No, actually, that's not my coffee, I always have an extra-large, extra-hot soy flat white, but she was busy turning on her brother. "Of course we've called her. A million times. I've texted. I've emailed. Haven't you?"


#1 New York Times bestselling author of Nine Perfect Strangers
Liane Moriarty
Apples Never Fall

"So four long blacks?" said the waitress. No one responded. "Okay, so four long blacks."

"Not Mum. *Her*." The cheaper-version brother put his elbows on the table and pressed his fingertips to his temples. "Savannah. Has anyone tried to get in contact with her?"

The waitress had no more excuses to linger and eavesdrop. Was Savannah another sibling? Why wasn't she here today? Was she the family outcast? The prodigal daughter? Is that why her name seemed to land between them with such portentousness? And *had* anyone called her? The waitress walked to the counter, hit the bell with the flat of her hand, and slapped down their order.

LAST SEPTEMBER

IT WAS CLOSE TO ELEVEN ON A chilly, breezy Tuesday night. Pale pink cherry blossoms skittered and whirled as the taxi drove slowly past renovated period homes, each with a midrange luxury sedan in the driveway and an orderly trio of different-colored trash cans at the curb. A ring-tailed possum scuttled across a sandstone fence, caught in the taxi's headlights. A small dog yelped once and went quiet. The air smelled of wood smoke, cut grass, and slow-cooked lamb. Most of the houses were dark except for the vigilant winking of security cameras. Joy Delaney, at number nine, packed her dishwasher while she listened to the latest episode of *The Migraine Guy Podcast* on the fancy new wireless headphones her son had given her for her birthday.

Joy was a tiny, trim, energetic woman with shiny shoulder-length white hair. She could never remember if she was sixty-eight or sixty-nine, and sometimes she even allowed the possibility that she was sixty-seven. (She was sixty-nine.) Right now she wore jeans and a black cardigan over a striped T-shirt, with woolly socks. She supposedly looked "great for her age." Young people in shops often told her this. She always wanted to say, "You don't know my age, you darling idiot, so how do you know I look great for it?"

Her husband, Stan Delaney, sat in his recliner in the living room, an ice pack on each knee, watching a documentary about the world's greatest bridges while he worked his way through a packet of sweet chili crackers, dipping each one into a tub of cream cheese.

Their elderly Staffordshire terrier, Steffi (named after Steffi Graf, because as a puppy she'd been quick on her feet), sat on the kitchen floor next to Joy, chewing surreptitiously on a fragment of newspaper. Over the last year Steffi had begun obsessively chewing on any paper she could find in the house, which was apparently a psychological condition in dogs, possibly brought on by stress, although no one knew what Steffi had to be stressed about. At least Steffi's paper habit was more acceptable than that of her neighbor Caro's cat, Otis, who had begun pilfering clothing from homes in the cul-de-sac, including, mortifyingly, underwear, which Caro was too embarrassed to return, except to Joy, of course.

Joy knew her giant headphones made her resemble an alien, but she didn't care. After years of begging her children for quiet, she now couldn't endure it. The silence howled through her so-called empty nest. Her nest had been empty for many years, so she should have been used to it, but last year they'd sold their business, and it felt like everything ended, juddered to a stop. In her search for noise, she'd become addicted to podcasts. Often she went to bed with her headphones still on so she could be rocked to sleep by the lullaby of a chatty, authoritative voice.

She didn't suffer from migraines herself, but her youngest daughter did, and Joy listened to *The Migraine Guy Podcast* both for informative tips she might be able to pass on to Brooke, and also as a kind of penance. Over recent years she had come to feel almost sick with regret for the dismissive, impatient way she'd first responded to Brooke's childhood headaches, as they used to call them.

"Regret" can be my memoir's theme, she thought, as she tried to shove the cheese grater into the dishwasher next to the frying pan. *A Regretful Life*, by Joy Delaney. Last night she'd been to the first session of a "So You Want to Write a Memoir" course at the local evening college. Joy didn't want to write a memoir but Caro did, so she was keeping her company. Caro was widowed and shy and didn't want to go on her own. Joy would help Caro make a friend (she already had her eye on someone suitable) and then she'd drop out. Their teacher had explained that you began the process of writing a memoir by choosing a theme, and then it was simply a case of finding anecdotes to support the theme. "Maybe your theme is 'I grew up on the wrong side of the tracks but look at me now,'" the teacher said, and all the ladies in their tailored pants and pearl earrings nodded solemnly and wrote *wrong side of the tracks* in their brand-new notebooks. "Well, at least your memoir's theme is obvious," Caro told Joy on the way home.

"Is it?" said Joy.

"It's *tennis*. Your theme is tennis."

"That's not a theme," said Joy. "A theme is more like 'revenge' or 'success against the odds' or—"

"You could call it *Game, Set, and Match: The Story of a Tennis Family*."

"But that's...we're not tennis *stars*," said Joy. "We just ran a tennis school, and a local tennis club. We're not the Williams family." For some reason she found Caro's comment annoying. Even upsetting.

Caro looked astonished. "What are you talking about? Tennis is your family's passion. People are always saying, 'Follow your passion!' And I think to myself, Oh, if only I had a passion. Like Joy."

Joy had changed the subject.

Now she looked up from the dishwasher and remembered Troy, as a young boy, standing right here in this very kitchen, racquet gripped like a weapon, face rosy with rage, his beautiful brown eyes full of blame and tears he would not let himself cry, shouting, "I *hate* tennis!"

> “AFTER YEARS OF BEGGING HER CHILDREN FOR QUIET, SHE NOW COULDN'T ENDURE IT. THE SILENCE HOWLED THROUGH HER SO-CALLED EMPTY NEST.”

"Ooh, sacrilege!" Amy had said, because her role as the oldest child was to narrate every family argument and use big words the other kids didn't understand, while Brooke, still little and adorable, had burst into inevitable tears, and Logan's face became blank and moronic.

"You don't hate tennis," Joy had told him. It was an order. She had meant: You *can't* hate tennis, Troy. She'd meant: I don't have the time or the strength to let you hate tennis. Joy gave her head a little shake to dislodge the memory, and tried to return her attention to the podcast.

"...zigzag lines that float across your field of vision, shimmering spots or stars, people who have migraine aura symptoms say that..."

Troy hadn't really hated tennis. Some of their happiest family memories were on the court. Most of their happiest memories. Some of their worst memories were on the court too, but come on now, Troy still *played*. If he'd really hated tennis he wouldn't still be playing in his thirties.

Was tennis her life's *theme*?

Maybe Caro was right. She and Stan might never have met if not for tennis.

More than half a century ago now. A birthday party in a small, crowded house. Heads bounced in time to "Popcorn" by Hot Butter. Eighteen-year-old Joy gripped the chunky green stem of her wineglass, which was filled to the brim with warm Moselle.

"Where's Joy? You should meet Joy. She just won some big tournament." Those were the words that unfastened the tight semicircle of people surrounding the boy with his back against the wall. He was a giant, freakishly tall and big-shouldered, with a mass of long curly black hair tied back in a ponytail, a cigarette in one hand, a can of beer in the other. Athletic boys could still smoke like chimneys in the seventies. He had a dimple that only made an appearance when he saw Joy.

"We should have a hit sometime," he said. She'd never heard a voice like it, not from a boy of her own generation. It was a voice so deep and slow, people made fun of it and tried to imitate it. They said Stan sounded like Johnny Cash. He didn't do it on purpose. It was just the way he spoke. He didn't speak much, but everything he said sounded important. They weren't the only tennis players at that party, just the only champions. It was destiny, as inevitable as a fairy tale. If they hadn't met that night they would have met eventually. Tennis was a small world.

They played their first match that weekend. She lost 6–4, 6–4, and then went right ahead and lost her virginity to him, even though her mother had warned her about the importance of withholding sex if she ever liked a boy: "Why buy a cow when you can get the milk for free?" (Her daughters *shrieked* when they heard that phrase.)

Joy told Stan she only went to bed with him because of his serve. It was a *magnificent* serve. She still admired it, waiting for that split second when time stopped and

Stan became a sculpture of a tennis player: back arched, ball suspended, racquet behind his head, and then…*wham*.

Stan said he only went to bed with her because of her decisive volley, and then he said, that deep, slow voice in her ear, *No, that's not true, your volley needs work, you crowd the net, I went to bed with you because as soon as I saw those legs I knew I wanted them wrapped around my back*, and Joy swooned, she thought that was so wicked and poetic, although she did not appreciate the criticism of her volley.

"…this causes the release of neurotransmitters…"

She looked at the grater. It was covered in carrot, which the dishwasher wouldn't wash off. She rinsed it in the sink. "Why am I doing your job for you?" she said to the dishwasher, and thought of herself in pre-dishwasher days, standing at this sink, rubber gloves in hot dishwater, a skyscraper of dirty plates by her side.

Her past kept bumping up against her present lately. Yesterday she'd woken from a nap in a panic, thinking she'd forgotten to pick up one of the children from school. It took her a good minute to remember that all of her children were adults now: adults with wrinkles and mortgages, degrees and travel plans.

The Migraine Guy spoke seductively into Joy's ears, "Let's talk about magnesium."

"Good idea. Let's do that," said Joy.

There was no way for the frying pan and grater to fit together. There was no solution. The grater would have to miss out. It was clean anyway. She straightened up from the dishwasher to discover her husband standing right in front of her, like he'd teleported himself.

"Jesus—bloody—what the—?" she shrieked. She pushed her headphones down onto her neck and put her hand to her thumping heart. "Don't creep up on me like that!"

"Why is someone knocking on the door?" Stan's lips were orange from the chili crackers. There were damp circles on the knees of his jeans from the melting ice packs. It was aggravating just to look up at him, especially because he was looking down at her with an accusing expression, as if the knock on the door was her fault. Joy's eyes went to the clock on the kitchen wall. It was far too late for a delivery or a market researcher. Too late for a friend or family member to drop by, and no one really did that anymore, not without calling first. Joy considered her husband. Maybe *he* was the one with dementia.

She knew from her research that the spouse must be patient and kind. "I didn't hear anything," she said, patiently and kindly. She would be an excellent carer, although she might waitlist him at a nice nursing home sooner rather than later.

"I heard a knock," insisted Stan, and his jaw shifted back and forth in that way that indicated annoyance. But then Joy heard it too: *thump, thump, thump*.

Like someone banging a closed fist on their front door. Their doorbell had been broken for years and people often knocked impatiently after they gave up on the bell, but this had the quality of an emergency. Her eyes met Stan's and without saying a word they both headed for the front door, not running but walking fast down the long hallway, quick, quick, quick. Steffi trotted along beside them, panting with excitement. Joy's socks slipped on the floorboards, and she felt that all three of them, man, woman, and dog, shared an invigorating sense of urgency. They were needed. There must be a crisis of some sort. They would fix the crisis, because even though there were no children living at home, they still had that mindset: *We are the grown-ups. We are The Fixers.*

Maybe there was even pleasure in that rapid walk to the door because it had been a while since any of the children had asked for money or advice, or even a lift to the airport.

Bang, bang, bang. "Coming!" called out Stan.

Fragments of memories flashed through Joy's mind: Troy arriving home from school when he was around eight or nine, hammering on the door and hollering, "FBI! Open up!" He did this for years every time he came to a door, thought he was so funny. Amy frantically ringing the bell, back when it worked, because she'd lost her house key yet again and was always in a hurry to get to the bathroom.

Stan got there ahead of her. He *click-clack*ed the deadlock with an efficient twist of his wrist and threw open the door.

A sobbing young woman lurched forward as though she'd been resting her forehead on the door and fell straight into Stan's arms, like a daughter. ●

Excerpted from *Apples Never Fall* by Liane Moriarty, to be published Sept. 14, 2021, by Henry Holt and Company. Copyright © 2021 by Liane Moriarty. All rights reserved.

THE LIANE MORIARTY CINEMATIC UNIVERSE

Miniseries, big success. Here's a refresher course on the author's TV and film projects past and present.

BIG LITTLE LIES (2014)
Moriarty's best-known adaptation hit HBO in 2017, earning the Emmy Award for Outstanding Limited Series in addition to dozens of other wins and nominations.

NINE PERFECT STRANGERS (2018)
The thriller about a wellness retreat gone horribly wrong is now a series (Hulu, August) starring Samara Weaving and Melvin Gregg (pictured) alongside a cavalcade of A-listers.

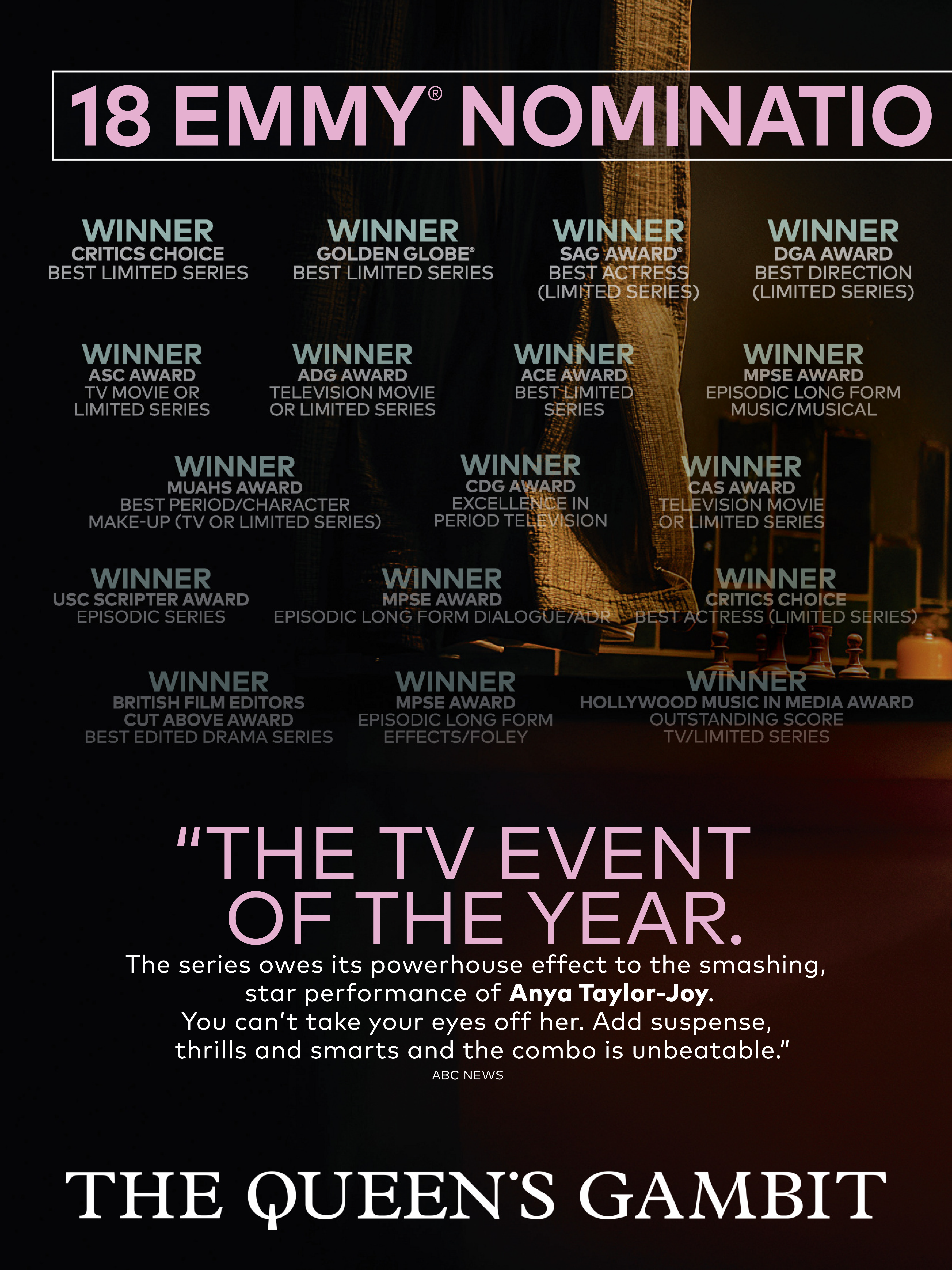
APPLES NEVER FALL (2021)
David Heyman, a producer behind *Marriage Story*, recently won the television rights to Moriarty's latest.

TRULY MADLY GUILTY (2016)
Reese Witherspoon and Nicole Kidman optioned the relationships tale in 2016; the project is still in flux.

THE HYPNOTIST'S LOVE STORY (2011)
Heather Graham shot an ABC pilot that wasn't picked up, but it's now being reimagined as an Australian co-production.

THE HUSBAND'S SECRET (2013)
Blake Lively signed on to the film version of Moriarty's fifth novel in 2017; it's in development at Sony Pictures.

BIG LITTLE LIES: HILARY BRONWYN GAYLE/HBO; *NINE PERFECT STRANGERS*: VINCE VALITUTTI/HULU



18 EMMY® NOMINATIO

WINNER
CRITICS CHOICE
BEST LIMITED SERIES

WINNER
GOLDEN GLOBE®
BEST LIMITED SERIES

WINNER
SAG AWARD®
BEST ACTRESS
(LIMITED SERIES)

WINNER
DGA AWARD
BEST DIRECTION
(LIMITED SERIES)

WINNER
ASC AWARD
TV MOVIE OR
LIMITED SERIES

WINNER
ADG AWARD
TELEVISION MOVIE
OR LIMITED SERIES

WINNER
ACE AWARD
BEST LIMITED
SERIES

WINNER
MPSE AWARD
EPISODIC LONG FORM
MUSIC/MUSICAL

WINNER
MUAHS AWARD
BEST PERIOD/CHARACTER
MAKE-UP (TV OR LIMITED SERIES)

WINNER
CDG AWARD
EXCELLENCE IN
PERIOD TELEVISION

WINNER
CAS AWARD
TELEVISION MOVIE
OR LIMITED SERIES

WINNER
USC SCRIPTER AWARD
EPISODIC SERIES

WINNER
MPSE AWARD
EPISODIC LONG FORM DIALOGUE/ADR

WINNER
CRITICS CHOICE
BEST ACTRESS (LIMITED SERIES)

WINNER
BRITISH FILM EDITORS
CUT ABOVE AWARD
BEST EDITED DRAMA SERIES

WINNER
MPSE AWARD
EPISODIC LONG FORM
EFFECTS/FOLEY

WINNER
HOLLYWOOD MUSIC IN MEDIA AWARD
OUTSTANDING SCORE
TV/LIMITED SERIES

"THE TV EVENT OF THE YEAR.

The series owes its powerhouse effect to the smashing,
star performance of **Anya Taylor-Joy**.
You can't take your eyes off her. Add suspense,
thrills and smarts and the combo is unbeatable."

ABC NEWS

THE QUEEN'S GAMBIT

NS INCLUDING OUTSTANDING LIMITED SERIES
LEAD ACTRESS ANYA TAYLOR-JOY

WINNER
WGA AWARD
ADAPTED LONG FORM

WINNER
PGA AWARD
BEST LIMITED SERIES

WINNER
SCL AWARD
BEST ORIGINAL SCORE
(TV PRODUCTION)

WINNER
GOLDEN GLOBE®
BEST ACTRESS
(LIMITED SERIES)

WINNER
AFI HONOREE
TELEVISION PROGRAM
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Reviews

THE MOST IMPORTANT TAKES OF THE MONTH

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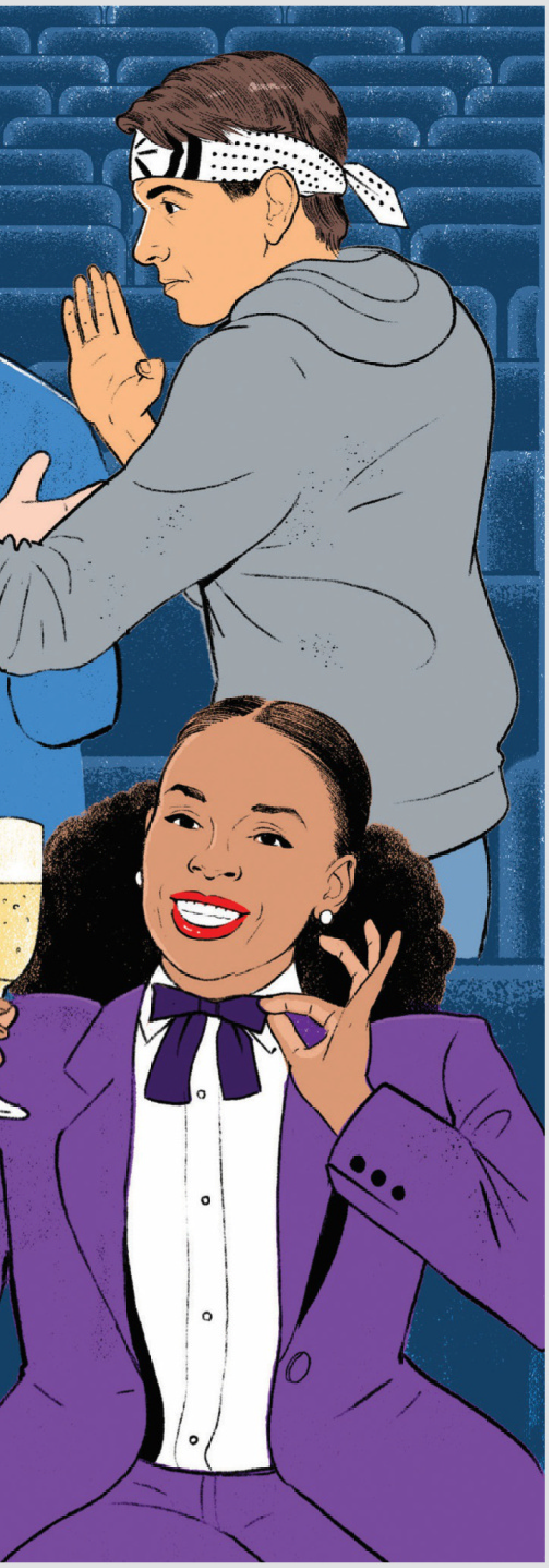

← Clockwise from top left: *Emily in Paris*' Lily Collins with *Pen15*'s Anna Konkle and Maya Erskine; *Ted Lasso*'s Jason Sudeikis with *Cobra Kai*'s William Zabka and Ralph Macchio; *The Amber Ruffin Show*'s star; *Bridgerton*'s Regé-Jean Page; and *The Queen's Gambit*'s Anya Taylor-Joy with *The Mandalorian*'s Baby Yoda

CELEBRATING TV

BY EMMY MEANS NECESSARY

NOW THAT THE ACADEMY HAS YOUR ATTENTION, WE SPOTLIGHT A FEW OF THE NOMINATED ACTORS, HIGHLIGHT SOME REQUIRED VIEWING, AND SHARE OUR PICKS TO WIN

YOU MAY HAVE WATCHED ALL THE *nominated dramas and comedies, but here are four Emmy hopefuls TV critic Kristen Baldwin suggests checking out before the ceremony (Sunday, Sept. 19, at 8 p.m. ET/5 p.m. PT on CBS).*

***Bo Burnham: Inside* (Netflix)**
NOMINATIONS 6, including Outstanding Variety Special (Pre-Recorded)

What did you accomplish during the pandemic? For most of us, "getting through the day" topped our to-do lists. For Bo Burnham, there was only one way to survive those long days and nights. "Look, I made you some content," he sings at the beginning of *Inside*, an 87-minute special he wrote, directed, composed, and performed all by his quarantine lonesome.

Inside is not just comedy, though it is searingly funny. It's not just a musical, though it's filled with crazy-catchy songs. It's not just performance art, though Burnham does get into an argument with a sock puppet about the exploitation of the global workforce.

The special is all of the above, but it's also an intense lamentation on isolation in the digital age. Even the purely "funny" songs—like "White Woman's Instagram"—pulsate with the ennui that stems from living amid a constant barrage of uncurated information. ("Here's a tip for straining pasta/Here's a 9-year-old who died," sings Burnham on the chilling "Welcome to the Internet.") You'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll ponder the foundation of your entire day-to-day existence.

***A Black Lady Sketch Show* (HBO)**

NOMINATIONS 5, including Outstanding Variety Sketch Series

There may be no 2021 sketch-comedy moment more sublime than overly supportive Ally (Ashley Nicole Black) giving a pep talk to her office's fire alarm. "Come through, fire alarm!" she hollers, as the Klaxon blares and smoke billows around her. "I hear you giving me better-late-than-never-let-me-make-sure-this-is-a-real-fire-and-not-just-a-drill energy!"

Created by Robin Thede, *A Black Lady Sketch Show* is a wonder of comedic craftsmanship. Every joke, every performance, every hairdo is on point. The verbal dexterity on display in "Gel It Like It Is"—in which a customer (Thede) and her nail technician (Gabrielle Dennis) gossip at warp speed while debating extra charges—is truly astounding. ("No tips for you or my nails but all I'm saying is Black Widow should have been played by a Black woman or a spider!")

Season 2 continues the meta-soap that plays out between sketches: Thede, Dennis, Black, and costars Laci Mosley and Skye Townsend hole up in a warehouse after the apocalypse; drama ensues. The new episodes also bring back recurring characters, including Dr. Hadassah Olayinka Ali-Youngman, pre-Ph.D., who scolds Gabrielle Union for being a working mom: "Why so many jobs, and how does your husband deal with this betrayal?" The sketches are specific to the Black experience (a hair salon where the curling irons never burn and the wigs never mat or tangle); the sketches are universally relatable (a woman gives an NBA-style, postdate press conference: "My strategy was to play hard to get. I waited a regulation three days before returning his text"). Missing *ABLSS* would be, as Dr. Hadassah might say, "a total abomination."

***Indian Matchmaking* (Netflix)**

NOMINATION Outstanding Unstructured Reality Program

In this witty and engaging (sorry) docuseries, Mumbai-based matchmaker Sima Taparia travels the world connecting her clients—single men and women of Indian descent—with potential spouses. Each job offers Sima a unique challenge. My favorite was Aparna, 34, a demanding, well-traveled lawyer based in Houston who rejected a suitor because "he didn't know Bolivia had salt flats." The highest praise she could offer a proposed match was "I don't hate him."

All of this is presented as glossy, cosmopolitan drama, without a hint of "look at these crazy foreigners and their kooky customs!" condescension. After its 2020 debut, some Indian critics blasted *Matchmaking* for enabling colorism and caste discrimination, though supporters countered that the show simply reflects uncomfortable truths about their society.

***The Amber Ruffin Show* (Peacock)**

NOMINATION Outstanding Writing for a Variety Series

Amber Ruffin once described her series as "the only late-night show that answers the question, 'What if we gave someone an unlimited budget for suits and puppets?' " Ruffin's colorful suits *are* indeed stylin', and her studio mail *is* delivered by a mailman made of blue felt, but there's a lot of smart behind *The Amber Ruffin Show*'s silliness. The comedian comes at the news of the week with sketches, songs, and the occasional '80s R&B parody video. (See: "Dr. Sexy's CDC Helpline," in which Ruffin's sidekick, Tarik Davis, stars as a physician fielding calls from randy women looking for guidance on dating in the pandemic era.)

Did we mention that Ruffin writes all of the original songs? ("White Supremacists Facing Consequences Fills Me With Joy" is a real banger.) And the show's viral "How Did We Get Here?" segments deliver brief, fact-packed lessons on the history of social and racial inequities without ever sacrificing humor. On vandals who defaced a Texas ramen restaurant with anti-Asian graffiti: "Do you know how stupid and racist you have to be to get mad at soup?" ●

THE AWARDIST PODCAST

↓

Hear our extended interviews with Mj Rodriguez, Kate Winslet, Hannah Waddingham, and more Emmy nominees on EW's The Awardist *podcast, available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or wherever you listen to your favorite podcasts*

Comedy Spotlights

JOAO CANZIANI/AUGUST

KENAN THOMPSON

THE ***SNL*** AND SITCOM STAR, 43, HAS TWO NOMINATIONS TO CELEBRATE.

***By* Derek Lawrence**

BEING *SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE*'S longest-running star would keep most actors busy enough—but not Kenan Thompson. The comedian spent the pandemic bouncing back and forth between the sketch show in New York City and his Los Angeles-based sitcom, *Kenan*, in which he plays a local talk-show host and recently widowed father. The countless hours of travel—and multiple versions of the *Kenan* pilot—worked out, with Thompson earning nominations for both Outstanding Supporting and Lead Actor in a Comedy Series.

"It's the ultimate pat-on-the-back payoff, because it was very stressful," says Thompson, who admits he gets a bit of extra satisfaction from his first nod as a leading man. "I can feel the difference. I mean, *supporting* has 'supporting' right in the title!" But he's still excited about returning for his 19th *SNL* season this fall: "I'm trying to get to [at least] 20," he says. "As long as the show keeps going and they want me to be there, why should I ever have to leave?"

JEAN SMART

THE 70-YEAR-OLD SCORED A LEAD-ACTRESS NOMINATION FOR THE COMEDY ***HACKS*** AND A SECOND NOD FOR HER DRAMATIC SUPPORTING TURN ON ***MARE OF EASTTOWN***

***By* Gerrad Hall**

How does comedy get you revved up in ways that drama doesn't, and vice versa? / You can take audiences on an experience with drama and hopefully make people think about something they've never thought about before. Comedy—if it works and you get that laugh, there's nothing like the feeling. I used to joke that if I ever had to pick, I'd pick drama, because if you're getting all of that out of your system at work, then maybe you're a sweetheart at home. [*Laughs*] And vice versa—if you have to be funny and charming all day at work, you're a monster when you come home.

The *Hacks* episode with edibles and the plastic surgery was a fun departure. Did you tap into personal experience for the edible-acting? / Yes! I remember saying it's almost like we're in a madcap comedy here! [*Laughs*] I am not a marijuana fan. The first time I had marijuana was in college, and it was in brownies—that was the only time I had it and enjoyed it, and I *laughed my ass off*. It was the best.

Did you have to pose for that wax figure? / That was me.

Wait, it was physically you? / Yep.

Would you equate that to playing dead? / Yes! That's really hard. [*Laughs*] The tough part was, my eyes get really dry so I was like, "Say 'cut' the second you can 'cause I gotta blink!" And [costar Hannah Einbinder] was doing all sorts of crazy stuff right in front of my face, flipping me off and doing cartwheels.

AIDY BRYANT

THE ***SHRILL*** AND ***SNL*** ACTRESS, 34, IS ENJOYING DOUBLE-NOM STATUS.

***By* Marcus Jones**

What aspects of *Shrill*'s final season have you seen really resonate with people? / Gosh, it's been a very cool mix. The overwhelming thing is how much they love Annie [Bryant] and Fran [Lolly Adefope] in the end, and that they're the ultimate pair, which I agree with.

At *SNL*, did all of you feel added pressure to entertain and make people laugh more than usual because of the pandemic and the election? / In a weird way, it's maybe the opposite. It was so challenging, stressful, and depressing at times behind the scenes that then the dumbest, silliest, goofiest sketches or ideas felt like, "Whatever; why not? Let's do it." Even Ted Cruz wearing Cancun braids—the goofier the better. We were up for it because we were searching for joy.

You're in the running for lead and supporting, but is there a comedy you'd want to guest-star on for a full sweep of nominations? / I would love to be on [Netflix's sketch series] *I Think You Should Leave*. Does that count? That's my dream.

SMART: ELISABETH CAREN/CONTOUR RA BY GETTY IMAGES; BRYANT: AARON RICHTER/CONTOUR RA BY GETTY IMAGES

Drama Spotlights

JONATHAN MAJORS

THE LEAD-ACTOR NOMINEE, 32, BATTLED SUPERNATURAL AND REAL MONSTERS ON ***LOVECRAFT COUNTRY***.

***By* Chancellor Agard**

How did it feel to get nominated just days after HBO canceled plans for *Lovecraft Country* season 2? / I was in a strange situation because I had no assurance that Atticus was even going to be in a potential season 2. I had made peace with not being with my *Lovecraft* family again. [So being nominated] really is a *Lovecraft*-ian situation, to be living in two realms with it.

When you look back on season 1, what are you most proud of? / Artistically, [learning] what my instrument [can] do when you have to perform in these very high-stakes situations, and then grounding all of that in the day-to-day. *Lovecraft Country* was the greatest jungle gym for my imagination—and for my approach to the craft of acting—that I think I've ever experienced.

What was the key to grounding Atticus amid all of the supernatural chaos he was facing? / The things I latched onto were [my costars]. That's how you lead an ensemble. You have to pay attention to the people you're with, and they ground you.

MJ RODRIGUEZ

AS THE FIRST TRANS PERFORMER TO LAND A LEAD-ACTING EMMY NOMINATION, THE ***POSE*** STAR, 30, ACHIEVES SOMETHING SHE NEVER THOUGHT POSSIBLE

***By* Nick Romano**

How did you hear the news of your history-making nomination? / I couldn't sleep the night before, so I just stayed up until [the announcement] in the morning. I was so nervous. I was like, "I'm going to record this, whatever the outcome may be." I was sitting at the table with my family. It had just been my mother's birthday—and we were celebrating my uncle, who had passed on the Fourth of July—so there was so much happening emotionally. We waited for the results, and they announced my name. I just ran to my mother. She grabbed me and swung me around. My godmother gave me the biggest hug and kept screaming, "You deserve it!" For a long time, I didn't feel like I was deserving of these things. There's so much stacked against us when we identify as trans. I had all these insecurities.

MAJORS: ADRIA MALCOLM/THE NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX; RODRIGUEZ: LIA CLAY FOR EW

I fell into my boyfriend's arms and I just started crying. It feels like I have finally stepped into a place where people can understand me as a human being.

The last time we spoke, you had some pretty frank words for awards voters. You felt they didn't see you as a woman. Has that feeling changed? / I do feel like that has changed, because there are people probably in [the Television Academy] who are letting others know how women like us move in the world. I didn't want my trans-ness to dampen the work I do as an artist. I just want my art to be seen and to be fulfilled through love.

In one of *Pose*'s final scenes, all these characters are recognizing Blanca as the woman she's become. What did that moment mean to you compared to this Emmy nomination? / Looking back, I see that it's so parallel, as far as the triumphs and the fight and the work that someone puts in to really be seen—and to want love to be emitted through what they do, whether it be a character on a show or the ballroom scene. Now I can say, with this nomination, I feel like me and Blanca are receiving the fruits of our labor.

You have an Apple TV+ comedy series with Maya Rudolph coming up. When do you start filming? / We start preproduction in August and start shooting in September. [The currently untitled show is] going to be like another rocket shooting off, and I am so excited. I get to be a totally different character from Blanca. I get to exhibit some versatility and show people that I'm funny and foolish as all hell. I never thought that would happen. I thought these opportunities were not accessible. It's the best thing to be proven wrong, because it makes you smile and it makes you want to fight even harder. I can't wait until the other opportunities come. ●

CHRIS SULLIVAN

THE SUPPORTING-ACTOR NOMINEE, 41, ADDS OFFBEAT HEART TO ***THIS IS US***. ***By* Dan Snierson**

THE FIFTH (AND PANDEMIC-SET) season of *This Is Us* continually tested Kate's quippy, depression-prone husband, Toby—from waiting for his daughter's birth in a parking lot to coping with job loss to hiding feelings (and job offers). But his defiant refusal of brother-in-law Kevin's financial assistance was the scene that truly taxed Chris Sullivan. "It's difficult for us to stay focused because we enjoy being in each other's presence so much," the actor says of filming with Justin Hartley over a sashimi platter. "Being mad at the man was some of the best acting I've ever done. On top of that, eating sushi for six hours can begin to weigh on a man's stomach and mind." Weighing on viewers' minds is Kate (Chrissy Metz) and Toby's fracture, which was flash-forward foreshadowed in the finale. "If *This Is Us* is a handbook on exploring every aspect of a relationship, *somebody* has to split up—and it wasn't going to be Randall [Sterling K. Brown] and Beth [Susan Kelechi Watson]," Sullivan jokes. "It'll be an interesting challenge—for both of us."

GILLIAN ANDERSON

THE SUPPORTING-ACTRESS NOMINEE, 53, BECAME THE IRON LADY FOR ***THE CROWN***.
***By* Clark Collis**

What research did you do prior to playing Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher? / A lot. I started reading and watching everything I could. The *Crown* team has a phenomenal research contingent, so I got to ask them for any obscure piece of footage or information I wanted. You just absorb as much as your brain can hold and hope it translates to something that makes sense to people who knew or experienced her.

Was it odd to look in the mirror and see Margaret Thatcher staring back at you? / Well, it was. When they put the wig on me for the first time, and having the particular eye shadow and the dyed eyebrows, it took your breath away. It was quite shocking, but also pretty cool.

You won an Emmy in 1997 for playing Scully on *The X-Files*. What do you recall about that night? / The dress I wore was so tight that I couldn't walk up to the stage normally. [*Laughs*] I didn't know until I was actually on live TV that I was going to have to walk sideways in order to get to the podium.

SULLIVAN: JJ REDDINGTON/BUZZFEED NEWS/REDUX; ANDERSON: CHARLOTTE HADDEN/CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES

KATHRYN HAHN

THE SUPPORTING-ACTRESS NOM, 48, MADE MISCHIEF (AND PERFORMED HER OWN THEME SONG) AS AGATHA HARKNESS, ***WANDAVISION***'S NOSY NEIGHBOR-SLASH-WITCH

By Devan Coggan

A sitcom-inspired Marvel show about suburban witches isn't your traditional Emmy fare. Were you surprised by the reaction to Agatha? / I was excited to take a swing into this genre, but I had never done anything on this scale before. I have no social media, so I had no idea what was happening, except all of a sudden I would get these emails or texts from friends, and then it started to become clear to me that this was a big deal. It really tickled me that it landed the way it did. There was something that made people feel really nostalgic about sitting around the television once a week. I know a couple families have said their kids have [become] interested in watching *I Love Lucy* or *The Dick Van Dyke Show* after seeing our show.

Did you expect "Agatha All Along" to become such an earworm? / I remember somebody telling me that I was on the iTunes chart. I was ahead of Bieber for a second! I was like, "What is going on?!" That, I credit to [Robert Lopez and Kristen Anderson-Lopez] for writing such a crazy, incredible jingle that just could not get out of your head. We had so much fun filming her delicious reveal.

What was your most rewarding day on set? / The deepest day for me was the day that [Elizabeth Olsen] and I spent together in [Agatha's] basement. The scene was long, and it was just the two of us all day. I remember we felt so connected. She's such an incredible performer, and I felt so crazy lucky that it felt so intimate. It didn't feel like we were doing this huge Marvel show; it just felt really small. I hold that day as being really fun and creatively juicy.

Most superhero stories don't necessarily dive into themes of grief and family drama. / Exactly. It was a superhero story about a woman's grief. And there's something about the metaphor of parenthood to me: You want to keep your kids close, but eventually they have to leave the nest. There was something doubly profound about it [airing during the pandemic], when we were all under the same roof for so long. I have a kid who's a teenager, and he can't wait to get the heck out. So I felt that metaphor. ●

→ She killed Sparky, too

HAHN: DANIEL DORSA/THE NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX; WANDAVISION: MARVEL STUDIOS

HAMILTON HITS *(AT)* HOME

NOMINEES **LIN-MANUEL MIRANDA**, **LESLIE ODOM JR.**, **RENÉE ELISE GOLDSBERRY**, **PHILLIPA SOO**, **DAVEED DIGGS**, **JONATHAN GROFF**, AND **ANTHONY RAMOS** REFLECT ON THEIR UNCONVENTIONAL EMMYS JOURNEY

***By* Patrick Gomez**

YOU CAN DEBATE WHETHER *HAMILTON* is a theatrical film (as it was originally intended, and as its Golden Globe noms would suggest) or a TV movie (as its pandemic pivot to Disney+ and 12 Emmy nods would imply)—just don't let director Thomas Kail hear you call it a "capture" of the Broadway sensation. "Tommy is really conscious to call it a 'preservation' instead," says lead-actor Tony winner Leslie Odom Jr. (Aaron Burr), one of seven cast members now nominated for reprising their roles in the musical. "Tommy let us tell a more intimate story, to be more revealing in close-up and add a wonderful layer to our work. It was satisfying in a way I wish every artist could experience."

Kail shot his "preservation" right after the 2016 Tonys, over a few days during and in-between Broadway performances. "We did it while doing eight shows a week. Our hearts were full, but we were very tired," says Anthony Ramos (John Laurens and Philip Hamilton), who is nominated alongside supporting actors Daveed Diggs (Marquis de Lafayette and Thomas Jefferson) and Jonathan Groff (King George). "But sometimes the most special things happen when you're exhausted."

Though the cast had performed the show hundreds of times, "knowing cameras are recording this for all time does change the equation for you," admits creator and lead-actor nominee Lin-Manuel Miranda (Alexander Hamilton). "Your challenge is to get that out of your head and simply do your show." But some, like Phillipa Soo (Eliza Hamilton), embraced the chance to play for the cameras. "I think there was a level of honesty—a newfound exploration, especially in a lot of the quieter moments," she says. Adds her fellow supporting-actress nomminee Renée Elise Goldsberry (Angelica Schuyler): "We grounded ourselves in each other, our belief in the show, and the excitement that we were no longer limited to the number of people that could fit in the building to see it."

The cast would've loved to celebrate a theatrical release together, but "I think the team made a smart and generous choice to release the film last summer because it was such a strange time in our world—and certainly in our country," says Groff, who filmed *Hamilton* during a quick hiatus from *Mindhunter*. "When it came out [on Broadway in 2015] it was a celebration of possibility. The timing of this iteration made it seem like a demand to live up to our potential," says Diggs. "It's cool to be part of something that remains meaningful to people even though the context has changed."

ADDITIONAL REPORTING > JESSICA DERSCHOWITZ

↓ (Clockwise from top left) Lead-actor nominees Lin-Manuel Miranda and Leslie Odom Jr. and supporting nominees Phillipa Soo, Jonathan Groff, Anthony Ramos, Renée Elise Goldsberry, and Daveed Diggs are not throwin' away their shot (at an Emmy)

HAMILTON: DISNEY+ (6)

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Limited-Series & Movie Spotlights (Cont.)

↑ (Clockwise from left) Supporting-actor nominee Evan Peters, lead-actress nominee Kate Winslet, supporting-actress nominees Julianne Nicholson and Jean Smart on *Mare of Easttown*

MICHELE K. SHORT/HBO (4)

MARE OF EMMYTOWN

HBO'S *MARE OF EASTTOWN* RECEIVED 16 NOMINATIONS, INCLUDING NODS FOR STARS **KATE WINSLET**, **JEAN SMART**, **EVAN PETERS**, AND **JULIANNE NICHOLSON**

By Samantha Highfill

DURING ITS SEVEN-EPISODE RUN, *Mare of Easttown*'s story of a small-town murder mystery captivated audiences—so much so that the finale temporarily broke HBO Max. It apparently captivated Television Academy members, too. The celebrated HBO limited series follows Kate Winslet's Mare Sheehan, a local Pennsylvania detective working to solve both a missing person's case and a murder, all while trying to heal from the loss of her son, who died by suicide. In more ways than one, Winslet's nominated performance was a significant departure from her usual leading-lady roles. "It was really important for me to absolutely let vanity go in playing this part," the Oscar winner says of spending as much time crafting Mare's external look as she did her internal struggle. "It was a luxury to put together someone who just looks like everyone else in the world who's having a hard time and struggling trying to raise a family and keep things together and put food on the table," she continues. "Mare's exhausted." Winslet (who previously won a lead-actress Emmy for HBO's *Mildred Pierce* in 2011) spent months with the real Easttown Township Police Department, loosely modeling Mare after real-life detective Christine Bleiler. "She was a complete pistol," Winslet says of Bleiler. "She would so often say to me, 'Sometimes it's messy. Sometimes things go wrong. That's life. Just get on with it.' "

In all, *Mare of Easttown* garnered more than a dozen Emmy nominations, including acting nods for three of Winslet's supporting cast: Jean Smart (as Mare's *Fruit Ninja*-obsessed mother, a total 180 from her other Emmy-nominated performance on HBO Max's *Hacks*), Julianne Nicholson (as Mare's loyal childhood best friend), and Evan Peters (as Mare's novice partner). "I was sent the materials and it said, 'Kate Winslet as Mare,' and I was like, 'I've got to really bust my ass and try to get this one,' " says Peters, whose character is tragically killed in the series' fifth episode. "Originally, we toyed around with the idea of him overcompensating for his impostor syndrome as a little more cocky," the actor explains. "When he dies, you want it to be shocking and tragic, so we decided to make him a little bit more of a bumpkin."

The series also received Emmy nominations for Outstanding Limited or Anthology Series, writing, directing, casting, and more. "It's been so exciting to see how people have been responding to it," says Nicholson, whose character plays a major role in the conclusion of one of the series' whodunits. "I don't know that I've ever been a part of something that there's so much chatter about. That's been thrilling." ●

BALLOT STUFFING

EW'S TV CRITICS PACK THEIR EMMYS OFFICE-POOL BALLOT WITH THOUGHTS, GRIPES, AFFIRMATIONS, AND QUESTIONS ABOUT SOME OF THIS YEAR'S CONTENDERS

By Kristen Baldwin and Darren Franich

This is me! And this is me!

○ **Nominated** 🔴 **Kristen predicts to win**
🔵 **Darren predicts to win** 💙❤️ **Nothing but love**

OUTSTANDING COMEDY SERIES

○ **black-ish** (ABC)
○ **Cobra Kai** (Netflix)
○ **Pen15** (Hulu) 💙❤️
○ **Emily in Paris** (Netflix)
○ **Hacks** (HBO Max)
🔵 🔴 **Ted Lasso** (Apple TV+)
○ **The Flight Attendant** (HBO Max)
○ **The Kominsky Method** (Netflix)
WRITE IN: Superstore (NBC)

Justice for Zabka!

When "the Netflix bump" goes wrong.

OK boomer. Oh, a millennial making fun of *Kominsky Method*—how original!

OUTSTANDING LEAD ACTOR IN A COMEDY SERIES

🔵 🔴 **Jason Sudeikis**, *Ted Lasso*
○ **Anthony Anderson**, *black-ish*
○ **Michael Douglas**, *The Kominsky Method*
○ **William H. Macy**, *Shameless*
○ **Kenan Thompson**, *Kenan* ❤️

Too many repeat noms for me.

[Noncommittal grunting sound]

OUTSTANDING LEAD ACTRESS IN A COMEDY SERIES

○ **Aidy Bryant**, *Shrill*
🔵 🔴 **Jean Smart**, *Hacks* 💙❤️
○ **Allison Janney**, *Mom*
○ **Kaley Cuoco**, *The Flight Attendant*
○ **Tracee Ellis Ross**, *black-ish*

Jean wins or we riot!

Thanks, Kaley, for saving HBO Max.

OUTSTANDING SUPPORTING ACTOR IN A COMEDY SERIES

🔵 **Bowen Yang**, *Saturday Night Live*
🔴 **Kenan Thompson**, *Saturday Night Live*
○ **Brett Goldstein**, *Ted Lasso* ❤️
○ **Brendan Hunt**, *Ted Lasso* ❤️
○ **Nick Mohammed**, *Ted Lasso* ❤️
○ **Jeremy Swift**, *Ted Lasso* ❤️
○ **Paul Reiser**, *The Kominsky Method*
○ **Carl Clemons-Hopkins**, *Hacks*

But are all four *Ted Lasso* guys REALLY better than GaTa from *Dave*?

Remember that *Mad About You* revival? No.

OUTSTANDING SUPPORTING ACTRESS IN A COMEDY SERIES

○ **Kate McKinnon**, *Saturday Night Live*
○ **Cecily Strong**, *Saturday Night Live*
○ **Aidy Bryant**, *Saturday Night Live*
○ **Rosie Perez**, *The Flight Attendant* 💙
○ **Hannah Einbinder**, *Hacks*
🔵 🔴 **Hannah Waddingham**, *Ted Lasso*
○ **Juno Temple**, *Ted Lasso* ❤️

Is it possible for someone to get nominated twice in one year and *still* be underrated?

There is no such thing as too much *Lasso* love.

OUTSTANDING WRITING FOR A COMEDY SERIES

○ **Girls5eva**, "Pilot"
○ **Hacks**, "There Is No Line (Pilot)"
🔵 **Pen15**, "Play"
○ **Ted Lasso**, "Make Rebecca Great Again"
🔴 **Ted Lasso**, "Pilot"
○ **The Flight Attendant**, "In Case of Emergency"

One writing nom in 2021, best-comedy win in 2022.

Tech Crew 4 life!

OUTSTANDING DRAMA SERIES

○ **The Boys** (Amazon Prime Video)
○ **Bridgerton** (Netflix)
🔵 🔴 **The Crown** (Netflix)
○ **The Mandalorian** (Disney+)
○ **Lovecraft Country** (HBO)
○ **Pose** (FX)
○ ~~**The Handmaid's Tale** (Hulu)~~
○ **This Is Us** (NBC)

The dead whale was a better character than anyone on *The Mandalorian.*

LOL, helmets.

Sorry, is this nom for season 1?

OUTSTANDING LEAD ACTOR IN A DRAMA SERIES

○ **Regé-Jean Page**, *Bridgerton*
○ **Sterling K. Brown**, *This Is Us*
🔵 **Billy Porter**, *Pose*
○ **Jonathan Majors**, *Lovecraft Country*
○ ~~**Matthew Rhys**, *Perry Mason*~~
🔴 **Josh O'Connor**, *The Crown*

No award this time, but I guarantee he'll win three Emmys next year for his one episode of *Loki*.

OUTSTANDING LEAD ACTRESS IN A DRAMA SERIES

🔵 🔴 **Emma Corrin**, *The Crown*
○ **Olivia Colman**, *The Crown*
○ **Uzo Aduba**, *In Treatment*
○ **Elisabeth Moss**, *The Handmaid's Tale*
○ **Jurnee Smollett**, *Lovecraft Country*
○ **Mj Rodriguez**, *Pose* 💙❤️

She's really come a long way from that Batman's Butler origin-story show.

Fiercest TV wardrobe of 2021!

CORRIN: GARETH CATTERMOLE/GETTY IMAGES; YANG: FRAZER HARRISON/GETTY IMAGES FOR COMEDY CENTRAL; WADDINGHAM: FRAZER HARRISON/FILMMAGIC

OUTSTANDING SUPPORTING ACTOR IN A DRAMA SERIES

🔵 🔴 **Michael K. Williams**, *Lovecraft Country*
○ **Bradley Whitford**, *The Handmaid's Tale*
○ **Max Minghella**, *The Handmaid's Tale*
○ **O-T Fagbenle**, *The Handmaid's Tale*
○ **John Lithgow**, *Perry Mason*
○ **Tobias Menzies**, *The Crown* 💙♥
○ **Giancarlo Esposito**, *The Mandalorian*
○ **Chris Sullivan**, *This Is Us*

Retroactive win for *The Wire*'s Omar Little.

Wrong, Kristen. Retroactive win for *Boardwalk Empire*'s Chalky White.

OUTSTANDING SUPPORTING ACTRESS IN A DRAMA SERIES

🔵 🔴 **Gillian Anderson**, *The Crown*
○ **Helena Bonham Carter**, *The Crown* ♥
○ **Emerald Fennell**, *The Crown*
○ **Ann Dowd**, *The Handmaid's Tale*
○ **Yvonne Strahovski**, *The Handmaid's Tale*
○ **Samira Wiley**, *The Handmaid's Tale*
○ **Madeline Brewer**, *The Handmaid's Tale*
○ **Aunjanue Ellis**, *Lovecraft Country*

Long live the Thatcher wig!

This *Handmaid's Tale* love, on the other hand, is officially getting ridiculous.

OUTSTANDING WRITING FOR A DRAMA SERIES

○ **Lovecraft Country**, "Sundown"
🔵 🔴 **Pose**, "Series Finale"
○ **The Boys**, "What I Know"
○ **The Crown**, "War"
○ **The Handmaid's Tale**, "Home"
○ **The Mandalorian**, "Chapter 13: The Jedi"
○ **The Mandalorian**, "Chapter 16: The Rescue"

Still crying, tbh.

Luke who showed up! (Confession: My editor gave me that joke.)

OUTSTANDING LIMITED SERIES

○ **Mare of Easttown** (HBO)
🔴 **I May Destroy You** (HBO)
○ **WandaVision**'s first eight episodes (Disney+)
🔵 **The Queen's Gambit** (Netflix)
○ **The Underground Railroad** (Amazon Prime Video)

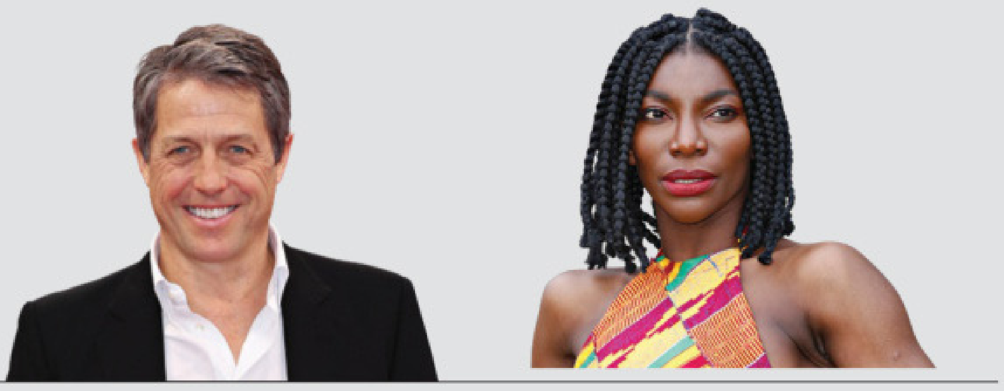
Praying for *Destroy You*, but I worry the Academy loves ceiling chess.

OUTSTANDING LEAD ACTOR IN A LIMITED SERIES OR MOVIE

🔵 **Paul Bettany**, *WandaVision*
🔴 **Hugh Grant**, *The Undoing*
○ **Ewan McGregor**, *Halston*
○ **Lin-Manuel Miranda**, *Hamilton*
○ **Leslie Odom Jr.**, *Hamilton*

...Who Was Definitely Not As Amazing As John Boyega In *Small Axe*.

It feels like this aired 30 years ago, but Hugh should still win.



OUTSTANDING LEAD ACTRESS IN A LIMITED SERIES OR MOVIE

🔴 **Kate Winslet**, *Mare of Easttown*
○ **Michaela Coel**, *I May Destroy You* 💙♥
🔵 **Anya Taylor-Joy**, *The Queen's Gambit*
○ **Elizabeth Olsen**, *WandaVision*
○ **Cynthia Erivo**, *Genius: Aretha*

Shhh: The pony-tail was a wig!

A sweep would be amazing, but she'll win for writing.

OUTSTANDING SUPPORTING ACTRESS IN A LIMITED SERIES OR MOVIE

○ **Jean Smart**, *Mare of Easttown* ♥
○ **Julianne Nicholson**, *Mare of Easttown*
🔵 🔴 **Kathryn Hahn**, *WandaVision*
○ **Phillipa Soo**, *Hamilton*
○ **Renée Elise Goldsberry**, *Hamilton*
○ **Moses Ingram**, *The Queen's Gambit*

Give Jean Smart all the awards. Every last one of them.

Eliza > Angelica. Respectfully, though, Peggy > all.

OUTSTANDING SUPPORTING ACTOR IN A LIMITED SERIES OR MOVIE

○ **Daveed Diggs**, *Hamilton*
○ **Jonathan Groff**, *Hamilton*
○ **Anthony Ramos**, *Hamilton*
○ **Thomas Brodie-Sangster**'s mustache, *The Queen's Gambit*
🔵 🔴 **Evan Peters**, *Mare of Easttown*
○ **Paapa Essiedu**, *I May Destroy You* 💙♥

Now this *Hamilton* love is officially getting ridiculous!

Seconded!

OUTSTANDING WRITING FOR LIMITED SERIES OR MOVIE

🔵 🔴 **I May Destroy You**
○ **Mare of Easttown**
○ **The Queen's Gambit**
○ **WandaVision**, "All-New Halloween Spooktacular!"
○ **WandaVision**, "Filmed Before a Live Studio Audience"
○ **WandaVision**, "Previously On"

So, let me get this straight—if a genius writes every episode of a miniseries they're eligible for only *one* nomination, but if a staff writes a miniseries they can get nominated multiple times, including for a lame Halloween episode?

OUTSTANDING UNSTRUCTURED REALITY PROGRAM

○ **Becoming** (Disney+)
🔵 🔴 **Below Deck** (Bravo)
○ **Indian Matchmaking** (Netflix)
○ **RuPaul's Drag Race Untucked** (VH1)
○ **Selling Sunset** (Netflix)

Why aren't all three *Below Decks* nominated? *Sailing Yacht* had all the sex idiots in quarantine!

I ♥ Aparna

OUTSTANDING VARIETY SKETCH SERIES

○ **A Black Lady Sketch Show** (HBO)
🔵 🔴 **Saturday Night Live** (NBC)
WRITE IN: **The Amber Ruffin Show** (Peacock)

Google "*Black Lady Sketch Show* nail salon." You won't be sorry.

← *The Crown* star Emma Corrin, *Saturday Night Live*'s Bowen Yang, *Ted Lasso* standout Hannah Waddingham, *The Undoing* baddie Hugh Grant, and *I May Destroy You* triple threat Michaela Coel

GRANT: BORIS STREUBEL/GETTY IMAGES FOR LAUREUS; COLE: JOHN PHILLIPS/GETTY IMAGES

WHEN MY BLONDE
IS LUMINOUS,
I FEEL LUMINOUS.
I'M WORTH IT.

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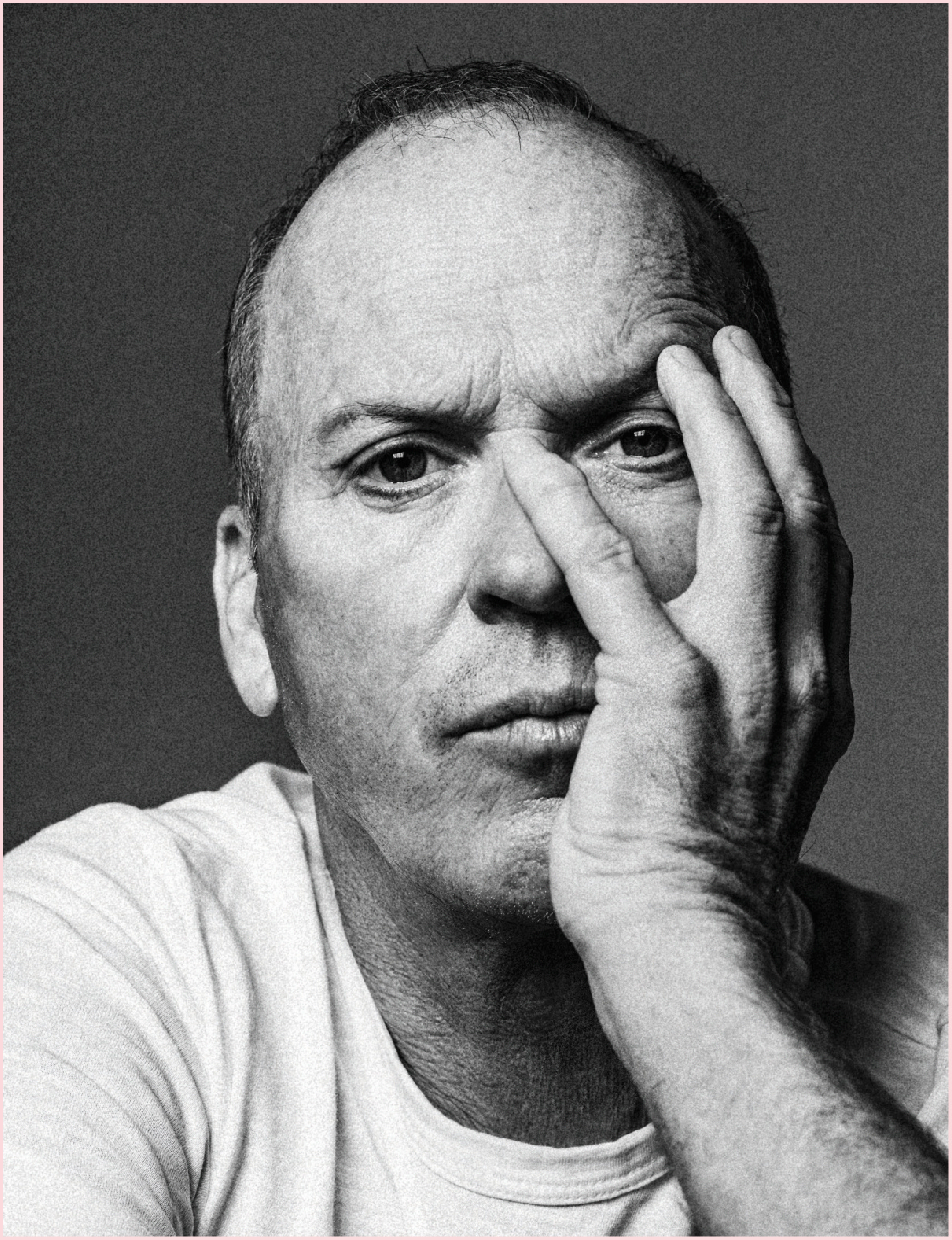

MAX VADUKUL/AUGUST

ROLE CALL

MICHAEL KEATON

THE ACTING MVP, 70—WHO STARS IN TWO MOVIES OUT THIS MONTH, THE 9/11 NETFLIX DRAMA *WORTH* AND THE PUNCHY ACTION THRILLER *THE PROTÉGÉ*—LOOKS BACK AT A LIFE'S WORK FROM *BEETLEJUICE* TO *BATMAN*, SHAKESPEARE TO *SPOTLIGHT*, AND BEYOND

***By* Leah Greenblatt**

1 / Night Shift • 1982
Ron Howard's Oscar-and-Felix tale of two mismatched co-workers (Keaton and Henry Winkler) at a New York City morgue nearly didn't become the actor's first big break: "I don't how many times I had to go back in and audition," he recalls. "It was just callback after callback after callback." On opening day, though, "I purposely went to see it alone. I wanted to sit right there in the middle of the theater in the afternoon, and it was wonderful. I don't know any other word to use, to tell you the truth."

2 / Mr. Mom • 1983
Penned by a then-unknown John Hughes, the story of a Detroit auto exec who becomes a stay-at-home dad was "sort of ahead of its time, in terms of the social consciousness. You have this man who loses his job and has to function traditionally as what was then considered a housewife, and also a woman [Teri Garr] who had to go out into the workforce saying, 'No, no, no, I'm more than capable.' But it had almost a Norman Rockwellian framing.... I just love this movie. It's like a little American classic."

3 / Beetlejuice • 1988
The fact that director Tim Burton originally wanted Sammy Davis Jr. for the part may be apocryphal, Keaton admits. But once he was cast, he says, "it was off to the races. I went to the makeup artist and said, 'I want mold on my face. My hair has to look like I stuck my finger in an electric socket.' Tim had the idea of the striped suit, and I said, 'These are his teeth. This is his skin.' [My character] isn't even in the movie very much! But it's 100 percent just an original piece of art."

4 / Clean and Sober • 1988
"People thought it was not a wise idea for me," he says of playing a coke-addled salesman in his first major dramatic turn. "I didn't care, I just thought the script was really good. [But] I had to learn what addiction is, how it manifests and how the disease works. It still gets shown at rehab centers, apparently, and people come up to me all the time to thank me, which is...I mean, I don't know what to say. I'm just the guy in it, but I believed in it."

5 / Batman • 1989
Putting a modern Batman on screen in a pre-MCU world was "a big risk and a gamble, and the pressure was really on all of us," he says, "especially Tim Burton. If it's a miss, it's a gigantic miss. That could set you back awhile, you know? There were zero [superhero films at the time]. There was only the original *Superman*, which is a very charming movie. But Tim started all of it. There would be none of this if it wasn't for what he did."

6 / Much Ado About Nothing • 1993
Kenneth Branagh's starry reimagining of Shakespeare shot in Tuscany, and Keaton recalls sun-dappled days and wine-soaked dinners with costars Denzel Washington and Emma Thompson. Though his "weird kind of Celtic accent" nearly killed the on-set Bard expert: "This poor man in his 80s with a straw hat on, God, he was so nice. He was watching me, going, 'He can't do this. Please, God, don't let him do this.' But Kenneth went, 'No, man, this is cool. Keep doing what you're doing.' "

7 / The Paper • 1994
"The truth is, there were two other things I would've liked to have done for a living," Keaton says. "A journalist or a landscape designer. I like digging in the dirt and designing things." Dirt was what he got in Ron Howard's kinetic tabloid drama—plus an iconic

2

3

5

6

7

MR. MOM, BEETLEJUICE, BATMAN, MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING, THE PAPER: PHOTOFEST (5)

onscreen fistfight with his costar Glenn Close. "She's so f---ing great and awesome. And she was so locked in, so formidable. She kind of scared me, frankly."

8 / Multiplicity • 1996

Shooting Harold Ramis' loopy sci-fi comedy about an L.A. construction worker who clones himself in the days before CGI was "so different from how you could do it now, acting against yourself with a ping-pong ball. But I loved it.... To me, Steve Martin invented what I call smart-dumb. Jim Carrey does it so well too, Jerry Lewis. And this movie is somewhat of an homage to all those great big silly comics."

9 / Jackie Brown • 1997

"Tarantino is a whole other discussion," he says of the director's bloody crime romp, in which he played Ray Nicolette, an ATF agent chasing down Pam Grier's felonious flight attendant. "It's just really clean, the vibe is cool. And one of the great, great film shots of all time in my opinion is Chris Tucker and Sam Jackson, when Sam puts him in the trunk to that tune [the Brothers Johnson's 'Strawberry Letter 23']. Man, that is as good as moviemaking gets."

10 / Out of Sight • 1998

"I'm a huge Steven Soderbergh fan, and the script was so good," he says of the stylish George Clooney–Jennifer Lopez caper. But it was the idea of revisiting *Jackie*'s Ray that sealed it: "The notion that a character shows up again in a whole other movie, whole other studio, whole other director, that's the fun of all this stuff for me.... Also, he jokes, "I was Jennifer Lopez's boyfriend way before Alex Rodriguez. I always wanted to remind him of that."

11 / The Other Guys • 2010

Adam McKay (*Anchorman*, *Vice*) called Keaton to play boss man to Will Ferrell and Mark Wahlberg's hapless NYPD duo in his antic comedy—a no-guff police captain who can't seem to stop quoting the lyrics of TLC. "When Adam said, 'Oh, by the way, [your character] has to take another job, so you work at Bed Bath & Beyond,' the phone fell out of my hand. I said, 'That's it. I'm in. I'm as in as you can be.' "

12 / Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance) • 2014

"I had seen all of Alejandro Iñárritu's movies and loved them," he says of signing on to star in the director's high-wire comic drama, which earned Keaton a Golden Globe and an Oscar nod. "I was shooting *RoboCop*, but I flew out for one day to meet him. We talked and talked and I thought, 'Boy, this is going to be really scary.' But when I'm frightened, that's generally a good sign."

13 / Spotlight • 2015

Tom McCarthy's fact-based exposé offered the actor another crack at activist journalism. "Being raised Irish Catholic and being an altar boy and all that, it was just too good not to do it," he says. "And to make an audience sit there spellbound like Tom did, that's really an extraordinary accomplishment, because it's a procedural."

14 / The Trial of the Chicago 7 • 2020

The actor actually chose his near-cameo—just two impactful scenes—as former U.S. AG Ramsey Clark in Aaron Sorkin's sprawling drama. "I said, 'I know this sounds funny, but I want that little role.' I was way deep into the movement. I marched, I went to Washington for antiwar demonstrations. This is of my generation. Plus, it's Sorkin."

15 / Worth • 2021

It took Keaton time to find his take on Kenneth Feinberg, the attorney charged with heading up the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund, for Sara Colangelo's true-life biopic (Netflix, Sept. 3). "What happened on 9/11 changed the country. There is a sense of responsibility and obligation in all that."

16 / The Protégé • 2021

"Maggie Q makes it look so easy," he says of his costar in the assassin thriller helmed by Martin Campbell (*Casino Royale*). "But to my credit, I did a very large percentage of my stunts. And I'm proud of it. Because when you're a little kid you think, 'God, I'd love to be able to be that kind of guy.' And then you get to be that guy. It was a ball, man." ●

JACKIE BROWN: EVERETT COLLECTION; *SPOTLIGHT*: KERRY HAYES/OPEN ROAD FILMS; *BIRDMAN*: ALISON ROSA/FOX SEARCHLIGHT

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↑ Mothers and daughters: Ruby (Emilia Jones) and her mom, Jackie (Marlee Matlin)

SPEAKING *THE* TRUTH

FIRST IT BROKE A SUNDANCE SALES RECORD. NOW THE TENDER COMING-OF-AGE DRAMA ***CODA*** IS GOING TO BREAK YOUR HEART.

***By* Mary Sollosi**

AFTER PROVING IRRESISTIBLE TO the far-flung audiences of January's virtual Sundance Film Festival (where it set a new sales record and won four awards), Siân Heder's crowd-pleaser *CODA* (now in theaters and on Apple TV+) is here to sweeten the summer. An acronym for Child of Deaf Adults, *CODA* stars Emilia Jones as Ruby, the only hearing member of her deaf family, which owns a small fishing business in Gloucester, Mass. While she provides indispensable help to her parents (Marlee Matlin and Troy Kotsur) by interpreting, she also secretly dreams of becoming a singer. As graduation approaches, she must choose between her passion and her obligation to her family.

"I think CODAs can have a very strong connection to deaf culture, and then sort of feel between two worlds but also a part of neither," says writer-director Heder, who adapted the movie as an English-language remake of the 2014 French film *La Famille Bélier*. Heder immersed herself in deaf culture, studied American Sign Language, and worked with ASL experts to write the script, which was "a very specific process," she says. "It's not a one-to-one translation."

That specificity in the film's dialogue applied to the entire production. After all, an authentic depiction of the deaf experience, including the casting of Ruby's parents and brother, was crucial. Matlin—the only deaf performer to have won an Oscar, for 1986's *Children of a Lesser God*—says she responded to the material immediately: "It's all about the writing, and it was accurate. There were very accurate details handled with humor, handled with heart."

Like Heder, Jones didn't previously know how to sign, but the young actress says that the experience of making the film, learning about deaf culture, and discovering the expressiveness of ASL "changed the way I work as an actor. The deaf community taught me the real meaning of communication." ●

Sign of the Times

HOLLYWOOD DOESN'T HAVE A STRONG HISTORY OF PUTTING A FOCUS ON DEAF CHARACTERS—BUT THAT MAY FINALLY BE CHANGING.

***By* Mary Sollosi**

Sound of Metal
Darius Marder's acclaimed indie drama about a heavy metal drummer who loses his hearing earned raves for star Riz Ahmed, picked up six Oscar nominations this year, and won for Best Editing and Best Sound.

A Quiet Place Part II
The second entry in John Krasinski's hit horror franchise brought back most of the first film's cast, including deaf actress Millicent Simmonds as a deaf teenager navigating the series' postapocalyptic world of silence.

Eternals
Oscar-winning *Nomadland* filmmaker Chloé Zhao makes the leap to superhero cinema in the fall with this cosmic comic-book adaptation featuring deaf actress Lauren Ridloff (above, far left) as Makkari, the first deaf superhero in the MCU.

CODA: SEACIA PAVAO/APPLE; *SOUND OF METAL*: AMAZON STUDIOS; *A QUIET PLACE PART II*: JONNY COURNOYER/PARAMOUNT; *ETERNALS*: MARVEL STUDIOS

← Aretha (Jennifer Hudson) and Dinah Washington (Mary J. Blige) have a dressing-room tête-à-tête

RESPECT

STARRING JENNIFER HUDSON, FOREST WHITAKER, MARLON WAYANS
DIRECTED BY LIESL TOMMY
RATING + TIME PG-13; 2 HRS., 24 MINS.

THE MOST COMMON FAILURE OF artist biopics is simple unworthiness: When a movie's subject is a bona fide icon of singular talent, it's all the more conspicuous when the film itself has the originality of an overly reverent book report. *Respect* (out now) isn't nearly as compelling a movie as Aretha Franklin was a singer, and even though the film never fully captures her brilliance, it does at least effectively allude to it. Those glimmers of greatness come, appropriately, in the music. Franklin herself handpicked Jennifer Hudson to play her (and was involved in the film's development until her death in 2018), and the Oscar winner, singing every song live, does as well as anyone conceivably could to emulate the sound of the Queen of Soul's otherworldly instrument.

Conveying Aretha as a person turns out to be the more elusive task. Chronicling a 20-year span—from Franklin's childhood (the easily Googled traumas of which are somewhat confusingly glossed over) to the landmark 1972 live recording of her "Amazing Grace" album—Liesl Tommy's film gives a wide, if not deep, perspective on her career in the context of her faith, her activism, and her complex family life. Ultimately, *Respect* generally hits the notes it needs to, both musically and historically, but comes up short in the most crucial ingredient—soul. **C+** —MARY SOLLOSI

THE NIGHT HOUSE

STARRING REBECCA HALL, SARAH GOLDBERG, EVAN JONIGKEIT
DIRECTED BY DAVID BRUCKNER
RATING + TIME R; 1 HR., 48 MINS.

THERE'S A "HOTEL CALIFORNIA"-NESS to most house horror that tends to get a little exhausting. If they can check out anytime they like, why do these hapless, terrorized characters never leave? (Or for the love of Airbnb, just take a long weekend.) Director David Bruckner's uncanny mood piece *The Night House* (in theaters now) at least gives its heartbroken protagonist, Beth (Rebecca Hall), a compelling reason to stay: The bucolic upstate lake home that most of the movie takes place in was built by her late architect husband, Owen (Evan Jonigkeit). They were happy there, and it's hardly been a week since he inexplicably took his own life in the little rowboat bobbing out front.

It's also soon clear that he has not—judging by the things that bump and go bloody in the night—entirely vacated the premises. Rust-colored footsteps scatter down the dock; urgent all-caps text messages materialize and disappear like a Magic 8 Ball; the couple's wedding song (Richard and Linda Thompson's haunted waltz "The Calvary Cross") continuously cues up of its own accord, a macabre playlist made for one.

While her well-meaning neighbor (Vondie Curtis Hall) and best friend (*The Report*'s Sarah Goldberg) do what they can to be supportive, everyone presumes it's just part of the mourning process. But Beth, a smart, pragmatic high school teacher, had her own unsettling brush with mortality as a teenager, and she's too overwhelmed by mounting evidence not to believe that there's something about Owen's death that won't rest.

Though the bag of tricks that Bruckner (*V/H/S*, *The Ritual*) digs through—the jump scares and shadow figures, the eerily suspended rules of gravity and physics—are familiar, he uses them to build a kind of clanging, feverish atmosphere. And British actress Hall (*Godzilla vs. Kong*), tasked with carrying nearly every scene, grounds her performance in more than meat-puppet panic; her unraveling springs from genuine, furious grief. Though its final scenes don't stick the landing, devolving into a muddle of grisly discoveries and half-baked mythology, the movie's stylized dread lingers, a doorway to an upside-down world whose stakes stay (nearly) real enough to make us care. **B** —LEAH GREENBLATT

→ Rebecca Hall's newly widowed Beth shines a bright light on terror in *The Night House*

RESPECT: QUANTRELL D. COLBERT/MGM; *NIGHT HOUSE*: SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES

↑ Lisa Joy directs Hugh Jackman, "a character actor who can be a complete chameleon," she says

Q&A

LISA JOY *AND* HUGH JACKMAN

THE WRITER-DIRECTOR AND STAR OF THE MIND-BENDING ***REMINISCENCE*** DISCUSS LOST PHONES, FOOD POISONING, AND BRAD PITT

***By* Lauren Huff**

IN THIS KINETIC SCI-FI THRILLER (out Aug. 20), Hugh Jackman is Nick Bannister, a war vet living on the fringes of the sunken Miami coast who helps people access lost memories. When new client Mae (Rebecca Ferguson) goes missing, his life is changed forever. Here, Jackman, 52, and *Reminiscence* writer-director Lisa Joy (*Westworld*), 44, break it all down for EW—to a point. "Whatever you think the movie is going to be," says Jackman, "it's going to pivot constantly and keep you on your toes."

Hugh, how did Lisa pitch the part to you?

JACKMAN She told me she'd pictured me all along, which I take with a grain of salt, but I did believe her for some reason. Normally in my head I'm like, "Yeah, sure, whatever. Brad Pitt said no, I get it, that's fine."

JOY It's actually completely true! I was like, "If he doesn't do it, then I'm not going to do it and I'll just let the script languish, because I'd rather see it not made than made poorly or with the wrong person."

Tell us about Nick.

JACKMAN In the not-too-distant future, there's a long, protracted war at the southern border of the United States. One of the things he was doing in the war was using this Reminiscence machine as a form of interrogation to get accurate information from prisoners of war. Now you find Nick Bannister as fairly solitary, very walled-off emotionally from the world. He's good at his job, but it's certainly not a thriving business; there are newer, fancier versions of what he does. [But] he's good at reading people, at getting inside their mind, of sort of journeying through their psyche to get to wherever they need to go. He's hiding a lot of secrets.

If the Reminiscence machine existed, how would you use it?

JACKMAN Stupidly, I would use it for lost keys, lost phone, lost things on an hourly basis. [But] I think the older I get, the more interested I am in wanting to know more about my past that is hazy. It's one of the themes of the movie, actually, that we're not really the most reliable narrators of our life. So I would really love to relive some of that stuff, even just for some clarity, and also just to relive some beautiful moments.

JOY I would definitely dabble. My kids now are 7 and 4. I would love to put myself back at that age and remember what it was like so I could empathize with them more in their frustrations and their curiosities, and to feel that wonderment. But I think also, wouldn't it be fun to go back on your first date with Deb [Furness, Jackman's wife] or Jonathan [Nolan, Joy's husband] and feel all the butterflies and everything?

JACKMAN Well, my view on that... actually, it wasn't our first date, it was our second, but we both got food poisoning. So I'm not sure. I'll tell you, it's a great litmus test for a relationship. If you can get through that, you can pretty much get through anything. ●

↓ Jackman makes memories with Rebecca Ferguson

JACKMAN AND JOY: BEN ROTHSTEIN/WARNER BROS.; *REMINISCENCE*: WARNER BROS. PICTURES

3 QUESTIONS WITH

John David Washington

THE *TENET* STAR, 37, IS ON THE RUN IN ***BECKETT*** (OUT NOW), FERDINANDO CITO FILOMARINO'S THRILLER ABOUT A TOURIST CAUGHT IN A GREEK CONSPIRACY. ***By* Devan Coggan**

1 / What was it about this man-on-the-run story that you were drawn to? Everybody has an ideal vacation—imagine that vacation turning into a nightmare. It could be a near-death experience or just argumentative and drama-filled. The idea of love and bliss and tranquil thoughts being disrupted, I found that interesting.

2 / How was working with your costars Vicky Krieps and Alicia Vikander? Vicky has this natural star quality and a tremendous skill set. That combination is very scary when you want to try and match it because you know she's going to elevate the take. And Alicia has such a strength about her. She understands cameras and lighting and knows her films and her directors. They're really phenomenal.

3 / You get pretty beat up in this movie. How was that physically? [Beckett] is a common dude, not very athletic. We talked a lot about that, Ferdi and myself, that animal instinct coming out. It's not going to look pretty. It's not going to look sexy. It's going to look very sloppy—and very awkward.

FRENCH CONNECTION

ACTRESS **CAMILLE COTTIN** CROSSES OVER IN TWO MAJOR HOLLYWOOD MOVIES THIS FALL—BUT SHE'D LIKE TO KEEP A LOW PROFILE, *S'IL VOUS PLAÎT*

***By* Lauren Huff**

CAMILLE COTTIN IS A RELUCTANT star. "Me is the thing I least like to talk about," she says.

Well, the actress, 42, should get used to it, because her brand of Gallic charm is very much in demand these days: She can currently be seen opposite Matt Damon in Tom McCarthy's awards contender *Stillwater*, and later this year appears in Ridley Scott's buzzy crime drama *House of Gucci*, with Lady Gaga and Adam Driver. Not to mention her breakout role on international hit *Call My Agent!* (available on Netflix), which was recently picked up for a fifth season and TV movie.

In *Stillwater*, which premiered to a standing ovation at Cannes in July, she plays Virginie, a French single mother who befriends Damon's Bill, a father trying to exonerate his daughter of murder. "The film is about traveling and meeting other people—and this is something we've cruelly been deprived of," says Cottin. "So it's a beautiful movie to share now, because it's really about finding yourself and going away to meet people and open yourself."

In *Gucci*, Cottin is Paola Franchi, the fiancée of murdered fashion heir Maurizio Gucci. She describes the experience of making the film as "a beautiful mixture of [Ridley] knowing what he wants and being completely open to collaboration. I had beautiful partners, too."

For an actress who's been working for more than 20 years, this is a satisfying chapter—not that Cottin would admit that. "It's because you're telling me an American audience knows me that I'm conscious of it," she says. "But it's still conceptual, I would say."

→ Camille Cottin Frenchifies Matt Damon in *Stillwater*

WASHINGTON: TIBRINA HOBSON/GETTY IMAGES; COTTIN: LUC BRAQUET/FIGAROPHOTO/CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES; *STILLWATER:* JESSICA FORDE/FOCUS FEATURES

MAKING A SCENE

CITY SLICKERS

HOW BRUNO KIRBY, BILLY CRYSTAL, AND DANIEL STERN SAFELY DODGED THE BULLS IN THE COMEDY'S ICONIC OPENER

***By* Lynette Rice**

THE RUNNING OF THE BULLS WASN'T in the original script of 1991's *City Slickers*. But writers Lowell Ganz and Babaloo Mandel were still looking for a fun, lively, and energetic way to start the movie about three married men—Billy Crystal, Bruno Kirby, and Daniel Stern—in a perennial midlife crisis. So before the plot takes the trio on a life-changing trip to a working dude ranch, Crystal got the bright idea to start the action in Spain. "He said even before the opening credits, we would meet these three guys running from the bulls at Pamplona," remembers Ganz. "We all got super excited. Billy ran down the hall at Castle Rock Entertainment and told [co-founder] Martin Shafer, who immediately picks up the phone and books rooms in Pamplona. He didn't even call Columbia Pictures because that's how we operated. It was heaven."

Crystal and his cohorts were never meant to check into those rooms, mind you. While a film crew went to Spain to capture actual footage of the annual stampede, the three actors were sent to a studio lot in Los Angeles. "It's all intercuts of Billy, Bruno, and Danny running in the San Fernando Valley," admits Ganz. Thirty years later, Ganz still marvels at the fact that a movie that "could have descended into silliness" turned into a sentimental romp with a message about finding your smile. "We wanted it to be a fun movie for grown-ups." You might even say it hit the bull's-eye. ●

CITY SLICKERS: EVERETT COLLECTION

← Drama queens: Loco Chanelle (Richard E. Grant) guides Jamie (Max Harwood) on his journey

SECRETS FROM THE SET

EVERYBODY'S TALKING ABOUT JAMIE

STARS RICHARD E. GRANT, MAX HARWOOD, AND BIANCA DEL RIO TELL US HOW THEY HARNESSED THEIR INNER DIVAS FOR THE FILM (OUT SEPT. 17 ON AMAZON PRIME VIDEO)

***By* Joey Nolfi**

High schooler and aspiring drag queen Jamie New learns to live his best life thanks to a fading icon named Loco Chanelle. Here, three castmates share lessons learned.

1 / Hit the loo before tucking

BIANCA DEL RIO (MS. HAYLOCK) Once you're tucked, never go to the restroom. That's why half the drag queens I know are miserable: They have to pee.
MAX HARWOOD (JAMIE) We spent so long in those looks on set. There's not much time to use the bathroom. Me and Richard were holding on for dear life.
RICHARD E. GRANT (LOCO CHANELLE) I took sips through a straw over 14 hours!

2 / Trade tights for body makeup—it looks (and smells) better

DEL RIO No matter how glam you look, you still sweat like a man.
GRANT Just throw [the tights] away! You don't want your clothes to say hello before you.
HARWOOD Have a wax, put on some Mac Face and Body [foundation], then you can wash it off!

3 / Consult your peers

HARWOOD I know a few queens in the U.K. that I reached out to for tips and tricks.
GRANT I watched every season of *RuPaul's Drag Race* in three weeks. I went to drag queen David Hoyle's show and spent a lot of time with him.
DEL RIO It's not until you're actually discussing [drag] with someone that you find this encouragement.

4 / Never underestimate the power of a good wig

HARWOOD I love wigs. I've been known to spend money on hair I don't need. Last week I bought two or three wigs; it cost me £400.
GRANT If you've got the wig and fabulous shoes on and leopard-skin leggings and 36 double-D's, I've got your fembot jubbly power here!
DEL RIO It's a packaging to get away with murder. If I was me out of drag, they'd go, "Oh, what a hateful little gay person." But when I'm in a wig I'm hysterical.

EVERYBODY'S TALKING ABOUT JAMIE: 20TH CENTURY STUDIOS; LAST NIGHT IN SOHO: PARISA TAGHIZADEH/FOCUS FEATURES

The Awardist
Entertainment

→ Anya Taylor-Joy and Matt Smith in *Last Night in Soho*

Who Will Be the Talk of TIFF?

AS ANOTHER UNORTHODOX AWARDS SEASON LOOMS, THE TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (SEPT. 9–18) REMAINS A RELIABLE GAUGE OF OSCAR HEAT. HERE, THREE PREMIERES TO WATCH. ***By* Joey Nolfi**

1 / Belfast

If five-time Academy Award nominee Kenneth Branagh has anything to do with it, Judi Dench—seven-time nominee and one-time winner—could bag a second statuette in 2022. Her part in writer-director Branagh's semiautobiographical drama about growing up in 1960s Northern Ireland falls in line with the Academy's recent penchant for offbeat grandmothers—*Hillbilly Elegy*'s Mamaw (Glenn Close), *Minari*'s beloved Soonja (Yuh-jung Youn)—in coming-of-age tales.

2 / Dune

Filmmaker Denis Villeneuve not only has a Best Director nod under his belt (for 2016's *Arrival*), his last three films have collectively amassed 16 nods. With a buzzy cast (Academy Award nominee Timotheé Chalamet, Zendaya) and Oscar-verified behind-the-scenes team, this adaptation of Frank Herbert's classic sci-fi novel has all the makings of a commercial blockbuster—with just the right prestige spice to suit Academy tastes.

3 / Last Night in Soho

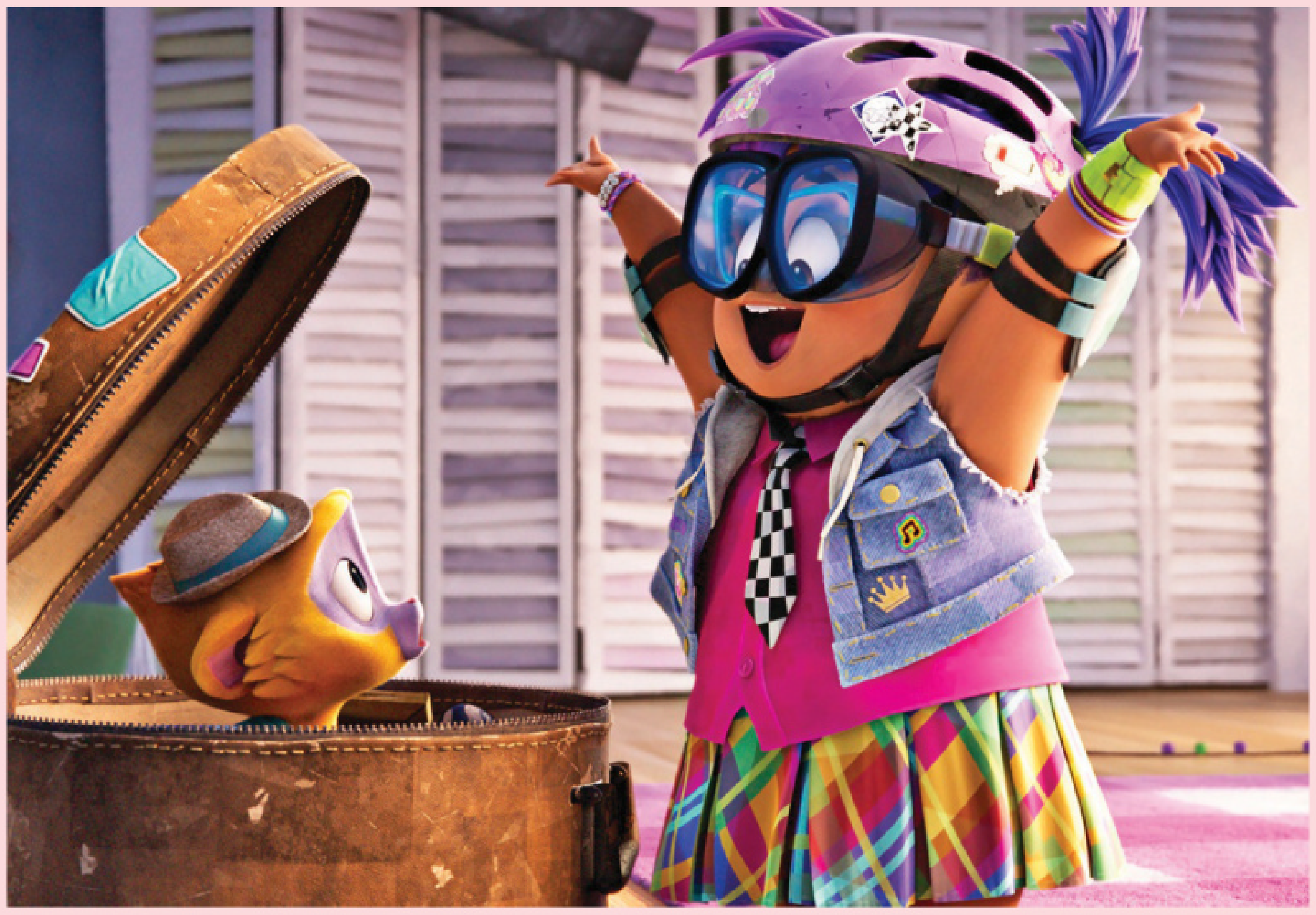
Shaun of the Dead director Edgar Wright skews more cool-kid cred than Oscar gravitas, but his psychological horror romp may change that. Written by *1917* Oscar nominee Krysty Wilson-Cairns and starring Anya Taylor-Joy—hot off her *Queen's Gambit* awards haul—*Last Night* could get Academy voters to look past genre boundaries.

IN OTHER FEST NEWS...
↓

EW was the media partner of Tribeca Film Festival's Reunions presentations (which took place June 9–20 in NYC), reuniting the casts of *The Royal Tenenbaums*, *Fargo*, and *The Five Heartbeats*, plus *Raging Bull*'s Martin Scorsese and Robert De Niro in a conversation moderated by Leonardo DiCaprio. For more, visit ew.com.

PARENTAL GUIDANCE

YOUR CRIB SHEET ON THE BEST ENTERTAINMENT FOR KIDS, FROM TODDLERS TO TWEENS



← Vivo (Lin-Manuel Miranda) seems a bit perturbed by Gabi's (Ynairaly Simo) sartorial choices

VIVO

STARRING LIN-MANUEL MIRANDA, YNAIRALY SIMO, ZOE SALDAÑA
DIRECTED BY KIRK DEMICCO
RATING + TIME PG; 1 HR., 36 MINS.

FORGET PIRATES. THIS MUSICAL caper's modern Caribbean is all neon waves and pastel clothes, with Cuban beats echoing all the way to Miami. Vivo (voiced by Lin-Manuel Miranda) is a kinkajou, and the animal half of a Havana street-performing duo. His owner, elderly guitarist Andrés (Juan de Marcos), gets a letter from his long-ago near-love, famous singer Marta (Gloria Estefan). Vivo sets off to bring Andrés' lost ballad to Marta in time for her last Miami show. That requires a stopover in Key West—and a partnership with Andrés' grandniece Gabi (Ynairaly Simo). Their trip cuts through the Everglades, so that's four coastal vacation locales in one brisk runtime.

Andrés dies early, which might worry any children who haven't seen *Soul*. But charismatic newcomer Simo makes Gabi a confidently aspirational eccentric, with a drum obsession that masks a sorrowful loss. Her shout-pop anthem "My Own Drum" is a kid's bop any adult can enjoy. Conversely, if you're skeptical of the lately controversial Miranda... well, the rapping kinkajou in a fedora won't change your mind. (Also: No drag show in Key West? Missed opportunity!) The youth will find fuzzy Vivo cute, if a bit plastic-looking. Miranda also wrote the songs, which merge mambo, hip-hop, a bit of EDM, and his own chatter-rap version of Broadway. That sums up the film's melting-pot clash of Cuban traditionalism and American-born Gen-Post-Z anarchy. Have tissues ready, and thank *Vivo* for teaching the little ones a valuable lesson: Do *not* go into a swamp alone or you *will* meet a tree-size python who sounds just like Michael Rooker. **B** —DARREN FRANICH

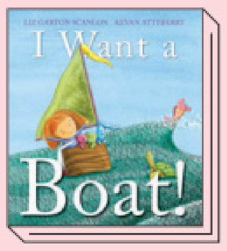
LOOK OUT FOR A way-too-gabby kinkajou and a potential conversation about mortality with the kids.

ROGER THAT
↓
Oscar-winning cinematographer Roger Deakins (*Blade Runner 2049*) served as a visual consultant on *Vivo*

Guilt-Free Picks

BECAUSE THE SUMMER FINISH LINE IS SO CLOSE YOU CAN SMELL THE NEW SCHOOL SUPPLIES

AGES 4 AND UP



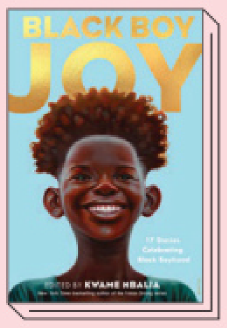
I Want a Boat!
BY LIZ GARTON SCANLON

This winsome story's takeaway? Give a child a box, and adventures abound! Bonus: save money on toys they cast aside for the box anyway. —LACEY VORRASI-BANIS

AGES 9 AND UP

Cultureverse
AVAILABLE ANYWHERE YOU LISTEN TO PODCASTS

Perfect for tall tales at bedtime, these 15-plus-minute episodes provide a world tour of myths spanning Mexico to Nigeria, pitch-perfectly narrated by cohosts Kelly Marie Tran and Yara Shahidi. —SABRINA FORD



Black Boy Joy
EDITED BY KWAME MBALIA

Kwame Mbalia, Jason Reynolds and more contribute to this spirited collection of stories, poems, and a comic that adults will appreciate—with the affirmation young Black boys deserve. —MARCUS JONES

AGES 12 AND UP

Fast & Furious: Highway Heist

The game setup is more complex than *Fast* plots, but the play is true to the franchise's action, and just as thrilling as Dom & Co.'s escapades. ($30; funko.com). —LVB

VIVO: SONY PICTURES ANIMATION

Lunchables
BUILT TO BE EATEN

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QUANTRELL COLBERT/STARZ

HEELS

NETWORK STARZ
PREMIERES AUG. 15
TIME 9 PM

IN THE WORLD OF PROFESSIONAL wrestling, *kayfabe*—the act of buying into a story that you and everyone involved knows is fictional—is everything. In this slow-burn new drama, two brothers in an indie wrestling league grapple with the dangers of living the lies they perform in the ring—and the ones they tell themselves. What happens to *kayfabe* when you're the only one left believing?

By day, Jack Spade (Stephen Amell) is a lawn-mower salesman in fictional Duffy, Ga. All other moments, he's working to keep the Duffy Wrestling League (DWL)—his family's promotion—afloat after the unexpected death of his father, Tom (a buff David James Elliott). Jack pulls double duty in the DWL, performing as a "heel" (wrestling parlance for "villain") and cranking out story lines for his players. Jack's brother, Ace (*Vikings'* Alexander Ludwig), is the league's popular "face," a golden-haired pretty boy who loves being loved by the crowd. But when Jack sabotages his brother's shot at the big leagues, Ace embraces his inner heel with fatalistic resignation.

Much like Starz's shrewd stripper drama, *P-Valley*, *Heels* finds its raison d'être in the stories of the people behind the onstage personas. Allen Maldonado (*You're the Worst*) is perfectly cast as Rooster, a charismatic wrestling veteran who's unable to hide his resentment about the limitations placed on Black performers: "That championship belt? It only really stands out against a white backdrop." His colleague Apocalypse (former NFL linebacker James Harrison), a recovering addict, thinks Rooster's got it all wrong: Every chance they get in the ring is a gift. Character-actor treasure Chris Bauer (*The Wire*, *True Blood*) is Wild Bill Hancock, a hard-drinking human cautionary tale. Bill made it out of the DWL to the majors—and all he got for his trouble was an addiction to oxy and the misery of watching pro wrestling "be destroyed by a ruthless lust for money." Showrunner Mike O'Malley is a hoot as a rival promoter hell-bent on putting Jack out of business.

Heels was created by Michael Waldron (*Loki*), and though it airs on cable, it suffers from streamer-bloat; the four episodes made available for review could use a tighter edit. Pro wrestling isn't as male-dominated as it once was, but it's still awash in testosterone, and *Heels*' female characters feel somewhat derivative. Jack's wife, Staci (Alison Luff), frets about finances and chides her husband for all the money he spends on the DWL. His business partner Willie (Mary McCormack) is a tough-talking broad who keeps Jack and his crew in line. Ace and Jack's mama (Alice Barrett) is a stern religious scold, and Ace's ringside "valet" (read: arm candy) is a pretty blonde named Crystal (Kelli Berglund) who has some good ideas for the league, if only the folks in charge would take her seriously. (Dear TV: May we please have a drama set in the South where at least one female character is fulfilled?) This is not a knock on the actresses; McCormack and Luff are particularly appealing in their roles and deserve more.

Ace is part bully, part brokenhearted manchild, and Ludwig embodies both facets of his character beautifully. The actor never loses sight of Ace's pain, whether he's humiliating a local shop clerk out of spite or tenderly soothing his nephew (Roxton Garcia). After spending eight years playing a stoic, square-jawed hero on *Arrow*, here Amell finally gets to be a bit of a bastard, without the redemptive possibility of saving the world. Jack is a hardworking guy, a family man, a great heel in the ring—but his determination to turn the DWL into a top promotion drives him to acts of emotional brutality.

Amell is a wrestling aficionado in real life, and *Heels* captures the humor and scrappy showmanship of sports entertainment. One wrestler's grand entrance involves a fierce-looking dead opossum that flies into the arena strapped to a drone. It's a genuinely hilarious moment, and one of the many reasons *Heels* has a good shot at drawing a crowd. **B+**

—KRISTEN BALDWIN

↖ Small-town wrestler Ace Spade (Alexander Ludwig, left) clashes outside of the ring with his brother/boss, Jack (Stephen Amell), on *Heels*

DISNEY

SULLIVAN CONFERENCE C

→ Kathleen Rose Perkins, Peyton Elizabeth Lee, Jeffrey Bowyer-Chapman, and Mapuana Makia scrub in for duty on *Doogie Kameāloha, M.D.*

FIRST LOOK

DOOGIE KAMEĀLOHA, M.D.

THIS REIMAGINING OF THE 1989 ABC SERIES THAT LAUNCHED NEIL PATRICK HARRIS' CAREER IS HEADED TO DISNEY+ (SEPT. 8). HERE, WE CHECK UP ON NEW STAR **PEYTON ELIZABETH LEE**.

***By* Samantha Highfill**

Were you familiar with the original *Doogie Howser, M.D.*?
I was not personally familiar with the original, but my parents loved the show. When I got the audition I started watching it, [and] that was my introduction to *Doogie Howser*.

How is your Doogie different from the one played by Neil Patrick Harris?
One of the really cool parts about this reimagining is that we take this iconic story and bring it into the world we're living in now. So it's a female lead instead of a male, and she is [mixed race], and it's in Hawaii, so we have this beautiful backdrop. It has nods to the original but also feels very modern. [*EDITOR'S NOTE: Read our take on the glut of reimaginings/reboots/remakes on page 94.*]

How would you describe your character, Lahela, a.k.a. Doogie?
Lahela is a 16-year-old doctor. [*Laughs*] As one is, you know. I got very excited about this character because I definitely relate to her in a lot of ways. I'm not a doctor, obviously, but I do spend a lot of my time in a professional setting with adults and having adult expectations placed on you and living that double life of being a professional and then also being a teenager. As the series progresses, we see Lahela navigating that and balancing those two worlds.

How difficult was it to pick up all the medical jargon?
Every night I would get home to learn my lines and have to Google everything. Not only are you saying it, but you're trying to say it in a way that seems like you say it all the time. [*Laughs*] It gave me a whole new level of respect for the actors on *Grey's Anatomy*.

Did you have a say in Lahela's amazing footwear?
A really fun part of it was working with our costume designers to have these little reminders that she's still a kid. She's in the hospital and she's wearing her new Air Force 1s.

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FANDOM CENTRAL

A FAN-WORTHY MONTHLY LIST OF WHAT TO WATCH, CHECK OUT AND OBSESS OVER

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IT'S TIME TO GET YOUR DING BACK

Have you lost your mojo? With the fresh and clean mouth feeling you get from Orbit Gum, you'll be able to get your ding back.

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ELEPHANT PICTURES/STOOPID BUDDIES STOODIOS/AMC

ULTRA CITY SMITHS

STREAMER AMC+
AIRS OUT NOW

YOU THINK YOU'VE GOT PROBLEMS? Street Hustler Boy is so broke he has to rent pants. The *Midnight Cowboy*-looking streetwalker offers back-scratches for $11 a pop. On a lean night, he hocks his jeans to pay for a flophouse bed. Then he needs *more* money to rent pants so he can make *more* money for tomorrow's flop. Ain't that capitalism? As voiced by Damon Herriman, *Justified*'s sweetest lunatic, the striver is troubled and lovable. "I know no one's buyin' what I'm sellin' anymore," he says. "My street name's Street Hustler Boy. I'm 42 now. I make no sense."

A homeless back-scratch hooker in a cowboy hat—and, like all the characters on *Ultra City Smiths*, Street Hustler Boy is also a repurposed baby doll brought to life via stop-motion. All these words are crazy, but the wonderful AMC+ original comes from Steve Conrad, the best TV creator you've never heard of (see sidebar to fix that). With animation and a wild cast, Conrad turns *Smiths* into the ultra version of his uniquely soulful absurdity. And the dolls sing!

Ultra City is a dream of retro New York sleaze: corrupt politicians, plucky criminals, hard- and soft-boiled cops, pro wrestlers, a disco called Studio 254, matchy-matchy youth gangs. (The Baseball Bowies rock *Aladdin Sane* makeup and carry bats for non-sport

↑ Think *The Warriors*, but the gang members are kids, and the scariest gang is the Nixons

pummeling.) It all looks beautiful in a jagged-edge way, evoking multiple eras of urban arcana. The six-part season starts when Det. Gail Johnson (Da'Vine Joy Randolph) pairs up with rookie David Mills (Jimmi Simpson). She's the seen-it-all cynic; he's the newbie from upstate who dances. They're searching for Carpenter K. Smith (Kurtwood Smith), a disappeared tycoon who was running for mayor. Everyone is a suspect, and there's a lot of everyone. Lady Andrea the Giant (Bebe Neuwirth) worries her daughter Little Grace (Alia Shawkat) is in deep with crime lord Rodrigo (Luis Guzmán), who's allied with crooked mayor Kevin de Maximum (Tim Heidecker), who's in cahoots with a police captain (Terry O'Quinn).

Yes: Lady Andrea the Giant, a wrestling champ the size of a Manhattan junior one-bedroom, is voiced by Broadway's Neuwirth. And that's all just one bite of the narrative pretzel, with visual gags and outlandish songs whirling into an enigmatic family saga. The opening credits list 22 stars—including Tom Waits, whose raspy narration can be ridiculous ("This is the greatest story ever told!") and endearing (the Narrator misses a few scenes because he's working two jobs "to get those ends to meet"). Simpson stuns as a wannabe hero who sings through his anxieties. Randolph's maternal exhaustion breaks your heart.

Smiths will air on AMC in September. Don't wait. Spring for AMC+ now. The service is best known for letting *Walking Dead* diehards watch episodes a week early, but *Smiths* proves the non-Netflix streaming tier has a lot to offer adventurous viewers. A subscription runs $8.99. It's a modest fee, really—less than the cost of a back-scratch. **A** —DARREN FRANICH

The World of Steve Conrad

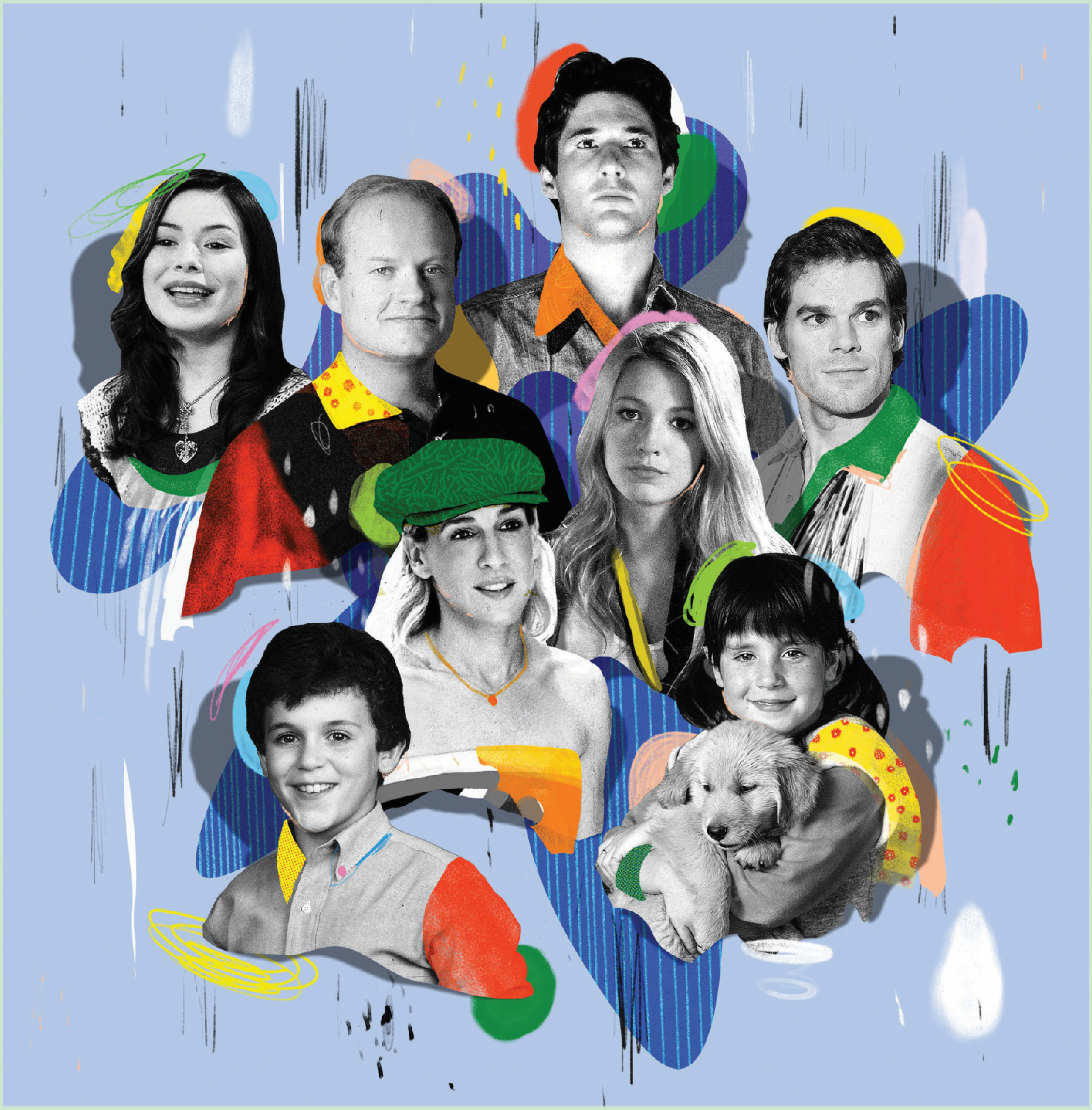
INTERNATIONAL LOCATIONS. GROOVY MUSIC. MISSING FINGERS. STREAM THESE ECCENTRIC MASTERWORKS FROM THE *ULTRA CITY SMITHS* CREATOR.

***By* Darren Franich**

***Patriot* (Amazon Prime Video)**
If Jack Ryan sang folk and felt sad all the time, he'd have a lot in common with John Tavner (Michael Dorman). Death and deceit follow the musical CIA agent from Milwaukee to Luxembourg on this bleakly hilarious two-season spy thriller. The loopy characters and black-hole ambiguity recall the Coen brothers, but there's a weight-of-the-world sadness underlying the hysteria. A good introduction to Conrad's anarchic humanism.

***Perpetual Grace, LTD* (Epix)**
Conrad's gleefully deranged follow-up twists the border noir genre into a Western tragicomedy. Jimmi Simpson mesmerizes as a drifter lost in a spiraling con. There's a violent pastor (Ben Kingsley), a Texas Ranger (Terry O'Quinn), the cartel, magicians, one insane astronaut, vast New Mexico landscapes, and a "gang of supportive nonviolent friends." Short-lived but astounding; EW's Kristen Baldwin called *Grace* the best show of 2019.

PERPETUAL GRACE, LTD: ©EPIX/EVERETT COLLECTION; *PATRIOT*: ELIZABETH MORRIS/AMAZON



REMAKE IT GO AWAY?

IF YOU'VE JUST ABOUT HAD IT WITH THE REBOOT TREND, IMAGINE HOW TV'S MOST CREATIVE MINDS FEEL. WE CHECKED THEIR TEMPERATURES TO SEE IF THEY'RE RUNNING HOT.

***By* Lynette Rice**

WE'VE ALL THOUGHT IT AT LEAST ONCE: TELEVISION IS running out of good ideas. And that's for good reason. For every *Ted Lasso* or *Succession*, there's at least one old title finding its way back to TV. This fall brings new versions of *The Wonder Years, The 4400, Chucky,* and *I Know What You Did Last Summer*. And we know you didn't ask for a fresh *Fantasy Island*, but Fox just gave us one anyway! So—as we prepare for the return of Carrie Bradshaw, Dexter, and the original *CSI* gang—we asked six creatives who've made a name for themselves off original ideas to weigh in on the reboot/remake/revival trend. Remarkably, it doesn't bother them...too much.

↑ (Clockwise from top left) *iCarly*, *Frasier*, *American Gigolo*, *Dexter*, *Gossip Girl*, *Punky Brewster*, *Sex and the City*, and *The Wonder Years* are just a few of the "reenvisionings" either currently airing or in development

ICARLY: LISA ROSE/NICKELODEON; *DEXTER*: PETER IOVINO/SHOWTIME; *GOSSIP GIRL*: GIOVANNI RUFINO/THE CW; *SEX AND THE CITY*: HBO; *PUNKY BREWSTER*: EVERETT COLLECTION; *THE WONDER YEARS*: ABC PHOTO ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

ILLUSTRATION BY SELMAN HOŞGÖR

MARC CHERRY
(*Why Women Kill*)

"Every once in a while, a reboot has a reason for being. One of my favorite ideas was *Westworld* because they did it from the robots' point of view. I thought it was revelatory. But other times they're rebooting something because they've got the rights, and it's not such an exciting idea. People have approached me about rebooting *Desperate Housewives*, but it's kind of like my feeling toward *The Golden Girls*: *The Golden Girls* was a terrific idea, but the magic of that show was the cast. We had the perfect group of women. With *Desperate Housewives*, I lucked out with that original cast and I had something to say with that show. If I was to do a reboot of it, I would have to come up with a brand-new idea of what fueled it. I know the formula, and it certainly would be great to try with more time and money."

Show he'd reboot *The Rogues*. "They were elegant people committing crimes and doing horrible things."

JEN STATSKY
(*Hacks*)

"I think people need to talk less about good or bad ideas and talk more about good or bad execution. Our show is an example. Someone could take our show and it could be poorly executed. I don't know that there's such a thing as a bulletproof idea. One thing that's hard is how you just don't get that much of a chance to find an audience anymore. *Seinfeld* wasn't a hit when it first started. It takes time for characters to evolve. Shows always have been in danger of getting canceled after one, two, or three episodes if the ratings aren't there. But I do feel that's something that is really hard to reconcile: that it has to hit right away."

Show she'd reboot *Wings*. "It's hard because all the shows that I love, I'd be scared to f--- them up."

STEVEN CANALS
(*Pose*)

"It makes sense to me that we're in a place where networks are wanting to revisit particular shows. I'm very excited about the *Sex and the City* reboot because I love those characters. I want to catch up with them. The flip side of that is the business part of it. I think that we're a very risk-averse industry. I get that there's safety in revisiting a show because there's a built-in audience so you're likely to have decent ratings. With that said, it would be lovely if the industry invested more in original ideas. I think about shows that I loved like *The Sopranos* or *Lost*. Those were original ideas. Would they even exist in 2021?"

Show he'd reboot *ER*. "I could use the show as a way to talk about mental health, important issues happening in our world right now. That show would be a great way to dig into that discourse."

BARBARA HALL
(*Madam Secretary*)

"In the history of storytelling there have only been about six themes. Are you saying we've solved the riddle of the human condition and those themes don't need exploring anymore? The thing about popular culture is that it's supposed to be—grab your socks—popular. One of my favorite stories to illustrate this notion is when Paul Simon, who is considered to be an exceptional lyricist, was asked about his favorite lyrics. His response was 'Be-bop-a-lula, she's my baby.' People become so worried about their taste credentials that they won't let themselves get lost in something that's just fun."

Show she'd reboot *Joan of Arcadia*, her old show. "I considered it but then I realized it would be impossible because of what would be missing this time around: carte blanche. I don't think I could get anywhere now because the process has changed."

CHUCK LORRE
(*The Kominsky Method*)

"No one's ever come to me and said, 'Hey, would you like to take this property that was once popular and bring it back?' Um, no. Creatively it feels kind of like a dull thing to do, especially if it was wonderful in the first place. I love the challenge of starting from a blank page and seeing if you can make something that has longevity, and that people can make a part of their lives. You know, a little bit of happiness that you can count on each week. That's what a good television show does."

Show he'd reboot *Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C.* "I loved that as a kid. But there's always that real possibility that you reboot something and make it less than what it once was. That would be a tragedy. It's better to just watch those reruns and love them for what they were *when* they were."

COURTNEY A. KEMP
(The *Power* Universe)

"I tried to do a reboot. It was called *Get Christie Love* [for ABC in 2018]. I thought the pilot we did with Kylie Bunbury was really awesome, but it didn't get picked up. I enjoyed the *90210* reboot [*BH90210*] immensely because it was so tongue-in-cheek. It's not the end of the world that everyone is rebooting everything. I think reboots can reenergize the brand. I'm not rending my garments while saying, 'Why are they doing more seasons of *Will & Grace*?' I've seen some of the reboots with the same casts—and *Will & Grace* was not one of them—where I was like, 'This is sad.' I will only sample reboots of shows that I really loved in their original iteration. I watched absolutely every minute of the *Mad About You* reboot. I can watch Jamie and Paul talk about *pasta*."

Show she'd reboot "There are actually three shows I would really love to reboot, but I'm not going to say because the minute I [do], someone else is going to do them!" ●

LORRE: JON KOPALOFF/GETTY IMAGES; HALL: KREMER JOHNSON; STATSY: JEFF KRAVITZ/FILMMAGIC FOR HBO; CANALS, CHERRY: KEVIN WINTER/GETTY IMAGES (2); KEMP: BRAD BARKET/GETTY IMAGES FOR STARZ

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WHAT TO WATCH

YOUR GUIDE TO SEPTEMBER'S NECESSARY VIEWING. ***By* Dan Snierson**

SEX EDUCATION

FRIDAY 9.17
NETFLIX

The offbeat, empathetic British comedy that explores high school awkwardness, sexual awkwardness, and the awkwardness that happens when your mom (Gillian Anderson) is a sex therapist returns for season 3. What awaits earnest Otis (Asa Butterfield) & Co.? According to Netflix: "Prepare for commitment animals, alien phenomena, vulva cupcakes, and much more of Madam Groff." Much more of Madam Groff? *Whoa.*

THURSDAY 9.2

SERIES DEBUT
Q-Force NETFLIX
An unambiguously gay quintet fights crime.

SEASON PREMIERE
What We Do in the Shadows
FX
What will the roomies do after discovering that Guillermo is ~~not doing the dishes~~ actually a vampire killer?

TUESDAY 9.7

SERIES DEBUT
Impeachment: American Crime Story ● FX
Long before Donald Trump was (twice) impeached, Bill Clinton was nearly removed from office. Ryan Murphy examines the late-'90s politi-sex scandal through a 2020s lens, with Beanie Feldstein as Monica Lewinsky, Clive Owen as Bill, Edie Falco as Hillary, and (Murphy-show must) Sarah Paulson as Linda Tripp.

SEASON PREMIERE
Queen Sugar ● OWN

SUNDAY 9.12

SERIES DEBUT
American Rust ● SHOWTIME
Jeff Daniels come(y)s back to Showtime, this time as a conflicted Rust Belt police chief who get entangled in a murder case.

MTV Video Music Awards ● MTV

MONDAY 9.13

SERIES DEBUT
Y: The Last Man ● FX ON HULU

FRIDAY 9.17

SEASON PREMIERE
The Morning Show ● APPLE TV+
+Julianna Margulies.

SUNDAY 9.19

Primetime Emmy Awards ● CBS

MONDAY 9.20

SEASON PREMIERE
Dancing With the Stars ● ABC

SERIES DEBUT
Ordinary Joe ● NBC
Several *Sliding Doors* open for James Wolk.

SEASON PREMIERE
The Voice ● NBC

WEDNESDAY 9.22

SEASON PREMIERE
Dear White People ● NETFLIX

SEASON PREMIERE
Home Economics ● ABC

SEASON PREMIERE
The Masked Singer ● FOX
Masks on again, people!

REBOOT DEBUT
The Wonder Years ● ABC
Now wondered aloud by Don Cheadle!

SUNDAY 9.26

The Tony Awards ● CBS
Honoring the best in theater that debuted before we knew phrases such as "Moderna vaccine," "Ted Lasso," and "second Trump impeachment acquittal."

THURSDAY 9.30

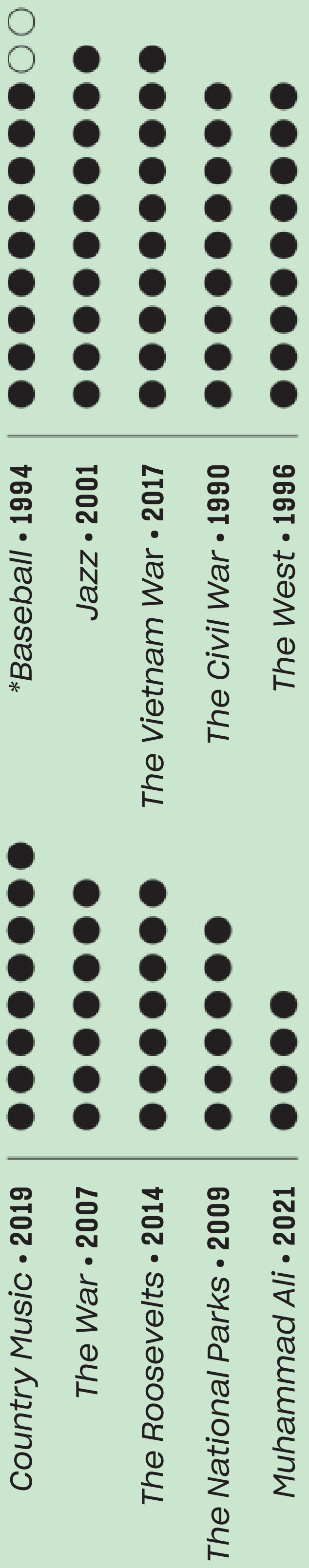
SEASON PREMIERE
Grey's Anatomy ● ABC
Meredith survives more stuff.

BOXER NOT BRIEF

↓

Flashy, boundary-smashy Muhammad Ali *gets the Ken Burns Multipart Documentary Treatment. How does* Muhammad Ali (Sept. 19, PBS) *stack up against Burns' biggest projects?*

Top 10 Burns docs, by number of parts



**Two parts were added in 2010.*

Fine *Nine*

LET'S SALUTE NBC'S DEPARTING COP COMEDY *BROOKLYN NINE-NINE*

Brooklyn always reveled in the boss-(in)subordinate dynamic via Holt (Andre Braugher) and Jake (Andy Samberg). Ahead of Sept. 16's series finale, relive H&J's essential moments on Hulu.

Father, may I?
When Jake calls Holt "dad" by accident, Holt relishes the slip while Jake plunges into denial. ("If anything, I see you as a *brother* figure.") Nothing a game of catch can't fix, right, son? (S1)

Hoop! There it is(n't)!
After the squad wonders about Holt's wrist injury, the captain confides in Jake that it was a "hula-hooping" accident, shows him incriminating evidence, deletes it, and taunts "No one will ever believe you." Watch Jake go from grin to chagrin in 4.3 seconds. (S1)

Mumps, bumps, and chumps
Quarantined with mumps, the duo become delusional, name their goiters Simon and Balthazar ("thirsty bitch"), and attack each other's neck bulges. Double poke? Triple laughter. (S3)

Birthday-boy joy
Roles reversed in witness protection, Jake becomes Holt's superior at the Fun Zone and enlists him to be DJ B-Day, resulting in a stilted, stewing rap-and-dance. To quote Jake, "*Again*." (S4)

CHECK OUT MORE TV RECOMMENDATIONS AT *EW.COM/WTW* OR ON OUR *WHAT TO WATCH* PODCAST ON APPLE AND SPOTIFY (ALSO AVAILABLE ON AMAZON ECHO AND GOOGLE HOME)

SEX EDUCATION: SAM TAYLOR/NETFLIX; *BROOKLYN NINE-NINE*: PATRICK ECCELSINE/FOX

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CLASSIC MIX

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PEANUT MIX
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MILK CHOCOLATE
DARK CHOCOLATE

PEANUT MIX

SCAN ON SNAPCHAT TO SEE
WHAT'S HAPPENING INSIDE THE BAG

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BROADWAY EDITION

WHAT TO WATCH

YOUR HANDY GUIDE TO THE GREAT WHITE WAY'S LONG-AWAITED REOPENING THIS FALL. **By Jessica Derschowitz**

↑ (Clockwise from top left) *Six*, *Wicked*, *Diana: The Musical*, *Pass Over*, *Company*, *Dear Evan Hansen*, *David Byrne's American Utopia*, and *Lackawanna Blues*

WICKED: JOAN MARCUS; *DIANA: THE MUSICAL*, *AMERICAN UTOPIA*, *DEAR EVAN HANSEN*: MATTHEW MURPHY (3); *PASS OVER*: JEREMY DANIEL; *COMPANY*: BRINKHOFF-MOEGENBURG

After more than a year of empty stages and shuttered venues due to the pandemic, Broadway is finally coming back—a milestone moment that began in June with the return of Bruce Springsteen's solo show and continues now with a packed calendar of returning productions and exciting new stagings. Here's what to look for on the theatrical horizon.

Familiar Favorites

Most of the first shows back will have familiar names on the marquees, with mainstays such as *Hamilton* and *Wicked* staking out September openings. Tony nominees *Moulin Rouge! The Musical* and *Tina — The Tina Turner Musical*, both highlights from the shortened 2019–2020 season, will also welcome audiences this fall. And stars like Jeff Daniels (reprising his *To Kill a Mockingbird* role), Sara Bareilles (returning to a new run of *Waitress*), and David Byrne (resuming his *American Utopia*) will be spotted in those freshly printed *Playbill*s.

The New Wave

Direct your eyes and ears to buzzy productions including new musical *Six* and the gender-flipped revival of *Company*, both of which began previews but didn't officially open before the shutdown, or watch the People's Princess take center stage in *Diana: The Musical*. (Meanwhile, the two-part *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* will return as a streamlined single show.) You also won't want to miss an intriguing lineup of plays getting Broadway premieres this fall, all penned by Black writers—including Antoinette Chinonye Nwandu's existential *Pass Over*; Keenan Scott II's debut, *Thoughts of a Colored Man*; Ruben Santiago-Hudson's one-man *Lackawanna Blues*; Alice Childress' 1955 landmark *Trouble in Mind*; and Lynn Nottage's latest work, *Clyde's*.

And Beyond

Want to plan even further ahead? *Dear Evan Hansen* pulls out its polos in December, while Hugh Jackman and Sutton Foster's *The Music Man*—and its 76 trombones—begins previews that month in advance of a February opening (as does the sure-to-be-polarizing Michael Jackson musical, *MJ*). Also on the horizon: revivals of *1776* and *Take Me Out*, and Sarah Jessica Parker and Matthew Broderick's rescheduled run of *Plaza Suite*. And hopefully a show that wowed theatergoers in 2019, the introspective Pulitzer Prize-winning musical *A Strange Loop* (from another MJ, Michael R. Jackson), will set plans for a Broadway bow. ●

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ENTERTAINING WEEKLY

ONE OF THE STARS OF OUR FAVORITE FOODIE SHOW IS ABOUT TO MAKE YOU *VERY* HUNGRY

MASTER OF NONE: NETFLIX

IT'S *AMORE*

MASTER OF NONE'S **ERIC WAREHEIM**—WHOSE COOKBOOK *FOODHEIM* IS OUT THIS MONTH—SHARES HIS MOST MEMORABLE CULINARY MOMENTS

By Seija Rankin

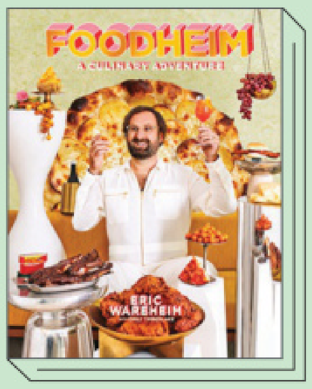
My Chef Celeb Crush
Mossimo Bottura in Italy. When we shot *Master of None* in Modena, he came up to me and Aziz [Ansari] and was like, "Why aren't you shooting in my restaurant [Osteria Francescana]? Come back tomorrow." He kicked out these princes who had a reservation so we could shoot. That scene [episode 2.2] documented our eating, and our reactions to it, in real time.

The Best Thing I Ate on *Master of None*
Mossimo's tortellini with parmesan cream. It's a classic dish, but he's perfected it.

The Food Moments You Didn't See on Screen
We want the show to be like a time capsule of our lives, so for the Italy episodes, Aziz and I took a vacation/scouting trip up and down the country looking for cool small cities. We settled on Modena because Emilia-Romagna is, like, the culinary capital of the world. Every night during shooting we would get on the train, have a four-hour dinner in Parma or Bologna, then do it all over again the next day.

My Favorite Scene
I was actually just with Aziz, and we re-created a scene from this little town called Pienza: We're on scooters and we take a break to eat ice cream and have a little pecorino. There's a feeling you get when you try things you can't find in America.

My Dream Location
We think it would be funny to do a big-bud/little-bud season in Japan. We've traveled there before, and with our different sizes—Aziz being an Indian American, and me being a giant white man—it just looks funny. And one of my top three experiences of all time was at a place called Sushi Sawada in Ginza. I literally cried afterward, it's that good.



← "This book is a collection of 15 years of me being obsessed with food," says Eric Wareheim of *Foodheim*. "It's my favorite things, but also recipes I wish I had when I was starting out. I still cook with it every week."

Tomato, *Tomahto*

CAN'T GO TO ITALY? MAKE THIS DELICIOUS PASTA FROM *FOODHEIM*

EMILIO'S POMODORO

INGREDIENTS

¾ pound dried spaghetti

3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling

6 garlic cloves, thinly sliced

3½ cups baby Sun Golds or other cherry tomatoes; half left whole, half sliced in half

1½ tsp. kosher salt

Fresh basil leaves for topping

Fresh grated Parmigiano-Reggiano for topping

Flaky sea salt

1 / Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add pasta and cook until al dente according to package directions.

2 / While pasta is cooking, warm the olive oil in a saucepan over medium heat. Add the garlic and sauté until fragrant, about 45 seconds. Add the cherry tomatoes and turn heat to medium-high. Cook until tomatoes soften and most start to burst, 3 to 5 minutes. Turn heat to low and season with kosher salt.

3 / When pasta is al dente, use tongs to transfer into the saucepan and toss to coat, adding a ladleful of pasta water as needed to loosen the sauce. Continue cooking over low heat until the tomatoes retain their shape but simultaneously make a silky sauce that coats the pasta threads.

4 / Transfer pasta to individual serving bowls and top with basil, cheese, sea salt, and a drizzle of olive oil.

ADAPTED FROM *FOODHEIM* BY ERIC WAREHEIM WITH EMILY TIMBERLAKE, © 2021, PHOTOGRAPHS BY JULIA STOTZ, ART BY DUKE ABER

OPHELIA MIKKELSON JONES

LORDE

ALBUM *SOLAR POWER*
LABEL UNIVERSAL NEW ZEALAND
GENRE POP/ROCK

THE LINE ON LORDE HAS ALWAYS been that she came into the world an old soul, fully formed—some precocious pop-star Buddha poured into the mortal coil of a girl from suburban New Zealand named Ella Yelich-O'Connor. At 16, she self-released "Royals," a sweet, stinging X-ray of modern fame; it went on to top the charts from Ireland to Italy and win two Grammys, including Song of the Year. The commercial and critical success of her first two studio albums, 2013's *Pure Heroine* and 2017's *Melodrama*, seemed to signal an artist only more sure of herself at every turn—Gen-Z's Kiwi poet-queen stepping serenely into her crown.

And then several years of touring and living and pandemic-induced intermissions passed; the singer cited the death of her beloved dog, Pearl, for the initial delays in completing *Solar Power* (out now). But the couplet that launches its folky falsettoed opener, "The Path," lands with switchblade precision, a tiny autobiography contained in two lines: "Born in the year of OxyContin, raised in the tall grass/Teen millionaire having nightmares from the camera flash." It's the kind of shrewd songcraft she's rightfully become famous for, dense with left-field references and filigreed detail.

The delicate, melancholy "California" finds her floating like a lady of the canyon over pretty Golden State reveries of desert flowers and "kids in line for the new Supreme"; there's a different kind of botany at work in "Stoned in the Nail Salon," whose sparse guitar hum backlights wistful lyrics about wishbones on windowsills and learning to slow down. If the album has a muse, it's the elusive silver-haired lover she seems to address on several tracks. (Yelich-O'Connor has never publicly acknowledged a partner, though Google sleuths are happy to draw their own conclusions.) "I should have known when your favorite record was the same as my father's, you'd take me down," she coos ruefully on "The Man With an Axe," a loping, willowy ballad on which she also admits, "I've got hundreds of gowns/I've got paintings in frames/And a throat that fills with panic every festival day."

Evidence of a less anxious Ella emerges on the lead-single title track, whose beatific music video showcases her frolicking on white sands in a silky two-piece the color of liquid sunshine, taking hits from a celery bong and exhorting her listeners to "Come on and let the bliss begin." Reception to the clip was mixed: Some said it looked like an ad for antidepressants or Old Navy; others embraced the benevolent-cult-leader vibe of it all. (Unsurprisingly, the internet also has no shortage of opinions about the album's cover shot, with its cheekily exposed undercarriage.)

The blithe gospel-chorused "Solar" stands out as one of the few pure-uplift moments on the record—which, like *Melodrama*, was mostly co-produced with Lorde's longtime collaborator Jack Antonoff. But *Solar Power* ultimately swerves away from that sort of rich sonic world-building—the galloping dance-floor synths, thunderous drums, and tricky time signatures—in favor of a feathery midtempo minimalism, delicate watercolor washes of sound wafting past her honeybee rasp.

At 24, Lorde is already a de facto elder stateswoman of the female-centered sound she helped pioneer: a nameless genre somewhere between high-gloss pop and indie rock, untroubled by the stringent rules of Hot 100 radio (see sidebar). So when rising acolytes Phoebe Bridgers and Clairo turn up on background vocals or Swedish deity Robyn drops a self-help spoken-word interlude into the battle-scarred musings of "Secrets From a Girl (Who's Seen It All)," it feels almost like a contact tracing of that loose but crucial sisterhood.

Maybe the singer, whipsawed by nearly a decade in the public eye and never quite convinced that the trade-offs justify the losses, is ready to cede some of her spotlight to the next wave. There's a subdued quality to *Solar Power* that feels a lot like caution, or just self-protection—a deliberate retreat from the raw, unfiltered verve of her earlier output into the safer remove of a wry bystander more at ease with cool observation than confessional bloodletting. "Now that cherry-black lipstick's gathering dust in a drawer, I don't need her anymore/Cuz I got this power," she intones airily on the gauzy closer "Oceanic Feeling"—no longer really a girl at all, and keeping certain secrets to herself. **B** —LEAH GREENBLATT

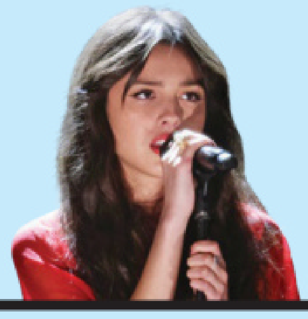
Solar Power

Lorde, Almighty

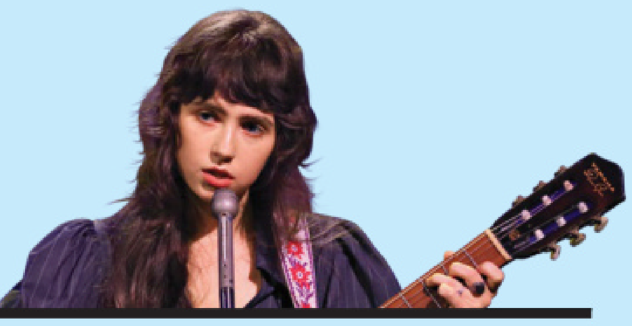
FIVE NEXT-GEN ARTISTS SPRUNG FROM THE SINGER'S FIERCELY PERSONAL SCHOOL OF STORYTELLING.

***By* Leah Greenblatt**

Billie Eilish
Eilish, now 19, also seemed to leap directly from her bedroom to the white-hot epicenter of pop—and has already earned seven Grammys for it.

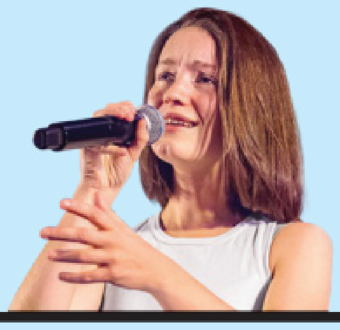


Olivia Rodrigo
Pop's current prom queen, 18, gilds her wounded anthems with restless teen spirit and riot-grrrl riffs on her breakout 2021 debut, *Sour*.



Clairo
With its winsome, sexually frank lyrics, the viral 2017 calling card "Pretty Girl" landed the 23-year-old legions of fans and a tour spot opening for Dua Lipa.

girl in red
No capital letters for the ethereal Norwegian-born Marie Ulven, 22; just a kajillion streams for her jangly musings about queer longing and desire.



Sigrid
Another Scandinavian, 25, whose breezy vocals and candy-heart hooks belie the defiant self-empowerment messages beneath them.

EILISH: KEVIN MAZUR/GETTY IMAGES FOR IHEARTMEDIA; RODRIGO: JMENTERNATIONAL/JMENTERNATIONAL FOR BRIT AWARDS/GETTY IMAGES; ULVEN: GRAHAM DENHOLM/GETTY IMAGES; CLAIRO: ANDREW LIPOVSKY/NBC/NBCU PHOTO BANK VIA GETTY IMAGES; SIGRID: PER OLE HAGEN/REDFERNS

NEW VIBRATIONS

THE HIDDEN CONNECTIONS BETWEEN **GEORGE HARRISON**'S SPRAWLING SOLO ALBUM AND AN OVERLOOKED **BEACH BOYS** MASTERPIECE. ***By* Jordan Runtagh**

AS THE 1960S CAME TO A CLOSE, the Beatles and the Beach Boys were both fighting to survive amid changing times and evolving internal dynamics. Ultimately, the latter remained intact while the former disintegrated—in effect ending the bands' seemingly parallel trajectories through stardom over the previous decade. But comparisons between the two groups persist half a century later with the release of two new box sets: a reissue of George Harrison's 1970 triple disc, *All Things Must Pass* (out now), and the Beach Boys' *Feel Flows: The Sunflower & Surf's Up Sessions 1969–1971* (out Aug. 27). The two projects serve as fascinating inverse parallels of each other, one a man shedding the constraints of compromise and the other a triumph of collaboration.

Harrison began studio sessions for *All Things Must Pass* in May 1970, just weeks after the Beatles' split became public. Years of contributing only two or three tracks per album had left him with a formidable backlog. The group passed on "Hear Me Lord," "Let It Down," and *All Things Must Pass*' title track—and his resentment bled through on songs like "Run of the Mill," a deft sketch of the Beatles' interpersonal squabbles. Free at last after years of Lennon–McCartney rule, Harrison unleashed an explosion of pent-up music that perfectly married his spirituality and humor to expertly crafted melody and harmony. Over two days he demoed 30 tracks for co-producer Phil Spector, who built his trademark "wall of sound" by recording a vast ensemble and thickening the results with reverb and echo. In the months before his 2001 death from cancer, Harrison expressed a desire to "liberate" the songs from this maximalist production. The recent reissue fulfills that wish, revealing Harrison's meticulous arrangements.

GEORGE HARRISON
ALL THINGS MUST PASS
50th ANNIVERSARY

THE BEACH BOYS
FEEL FLOWS
The Sunflower & Surf's Up Sessions · 1969 - 1971

Spector is also a critical character in the Beach Boys' story, having inspired leader Brian Wilson's

HARRISON: BARRY FEINSTEIN; WILSON: MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

18+

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approach to hitmaking. But by 1969, Brian's addiction and mental health struggles forced him to abdicate his role as the band's gracious dictator. An image problem added to the Beach Boys' woes, and by the dawn of the '70s they were dismissed as candy-striped has-beens. But a new record deal offered a glimmer of hope. Like Harrison, they saw a chance for a fresh start—though one they would embark on together, as a group of equals.

Brian's younger brother Carl, who took over as the band's primary producer and musical director, oversaw sessions for *Sunflower*. Although Mike Love, Al Jardine, and Bruce Johnston all made valuable contributions, another Wilson brother emerged as an unlikely MVP, with Dennis Wilson morphing from the band's party-boy drummer into their secret weapon. The four tracks he co-wrote on *Sunflower*, including the classic ballad "Forever," rank among the album's best. He also penned a significant portion of the previously unreleased music now available on *Feel Flows*. It's the sound of a talented, consistently sidelined songwriter coming into his own. Dennis and Harrison fulfilled similar roles in their groups: Their dormant, patient brilliance was hidden in plain sight.

Though critically lauded, *Sunflower* was commercially ignored. But Harrison's *All Things Must Pass* was a smash, topping the charts and spawning the No. 1 single "My Sweet Lord." Sales aside, both albums are artistic triumphs, showcasing two entities that endured—and thrived—after losing their longtime creative engines.

Bolstered by the good reviews, the Beach Boys returned to the studio in 1971 to begin work on *Surf's Up* (also explored on *Feel Flows*). The record marked a turn toward darker, more socially conscious material and even less involvement from Brian. As the Boys transitioned into this new phase, the Quiet Beatle dropped by the studio to visit. Oh, to be a fly on the wall for *that* conversation. ●

VAN ETTEN: SCOTT LEGATO/GETTY IMAGES; HOWARD: PHIL MCCARTEN/CBS VIA GETTY IMAGES; GAGA: KEVIN MAZUR/GETTY IMAGES FOR AT&T; METALLICA: MIDORI TSUKAGOSHI/SHINKO MUSIC/GETTY IMAGES

→ **Clockwise, from left** Sharon Van Etten, Brittany Howard, Lady Gaga, Metallica

FULLY COVERED

FROM GAGA TO METALLICA, RECORDING ARTISTS ARE CELEBRATING OLD HITS WITH COLLECTIONS OF OTHER ARTISTS COVERING THEIR SONGS. WE RUN DOWN FOUR OF THESE "REINTERPRETED" ALBUMS.

***By* Alex Suskind**

Born This Way the Tenth Anniversary
Lady Gaga

THE LOWDOWN
Mother Monster throws her sophomore album a 10th-birthday party, with eight artists taking on its most successful tracks.

DOES IT WORK?
Sometimes

BEST AND WORST
Skip Ben Platt's "You and I," which saps the original of its bruising arena-rock glory, and head straight to the bounce-inflected "Judas" by Big Freedia or masked marvel Orville Peck's slow-drawl title track.

Jaime Reimagined
Brittany Howard

THE LOWDOWN
One of 2019's best, Howard's debut solo album gets a spectacular "reimagining" from a who's who of critically acclaimed talent, including Bon Iver, Earthgang, Common, and more.

DOES IT WORK?
Yes

BEST AND WORST
Hard to choose a best when all 13 tracks shine bright, but you can't go wrong with the sunny string section and spacey hip-hop drums of Childish Gambino's "Stay High."

The Blacklist
Metallica

THE LOWDOWN
The self-titled 1991 LP that turned Metallica into global rock gods is celebrated with 53 covers from a very random list of artists. (Alessia Cara doing "Enter Sandman"? Sure.)

DOES IT WORK?
Sometimes

BEST AND WORST
Does anyone really need 12 versions of the band's acoustic classic "Nothing Else Matters"? When it's covered by Phoebe Bridgers, Mickey Guyton, Chris Stapleton, Roxette, and many more—they do.

Epic Ten
Sharon Van Etten

THE LOWDOWN
Van Etten's fierce *Epic* further solidified her status as an indie-rock darling. A decade later, she has a few of her favorite singers reinterpret the original.

DOES IT WORK?
Mostly

BEST AND WORST
Big Red Machine's "A Crime" lacks the rawness of Van Etten's; Shamir's warbling falsetto is a perfect fit for "DSharpG"; and Fiona Apple's "Love More" is just perfect.

4:32 am — Restless
6:27 am — Exhausted
10:49 am — Stressed
1:45 pm — Loving
3:46 pm — Excited
5:47 pm — Insecure
8:42 pm — Hopeful
11:07 pm — Grateful

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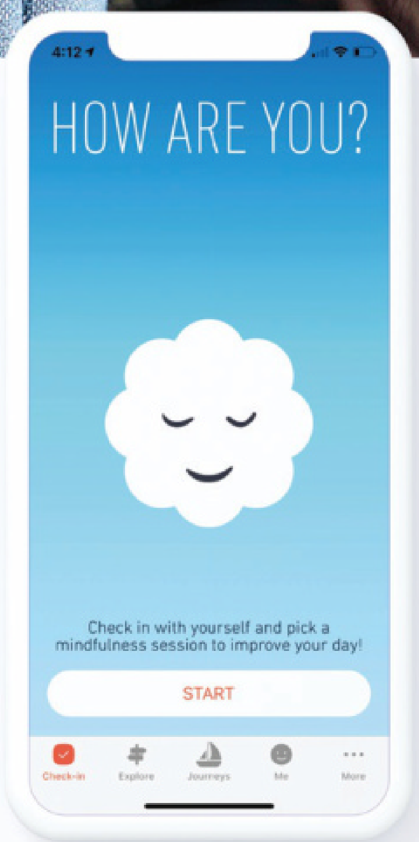

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SEBASTIAN MLYNARSKI & KEVIN J THOMSON

CHVRCHES

ALBUM *SCREEN VIOLENCE*
LABEL GLASSNOTE RECORDS
GENRE POP

SINCE THEIR FORMATION IN 2011, Chvrches have been wowing festival crowds with their 21st-century update of new wave. Lauren Mayberry's soprano gleams like steel, making the moments when it trembles with emotion hit even harder; her bandmates Iain Cook and Martin Doherty surround her voice with guitar fuzz, keyboard washes, and pounding drums—reflecting and magnifying any feelings in the mix.

Their new album, *Screen Violence* (out Aug. 27), could be mistaken for a crate-dug find from multiple eras. It's rooted in the moodier synth-pop that rumbled across college-radio playlists in the '80s: "How Not to Drown," a duet with Robert Smith of the Cure, fills its sonic space with guitars that recall that British act's stadium-size peaks. But the record is also made for the streaming age, with siren-call refrains exploding out of the thickets that surround tracks like the churning "Violent Delights" and the claustrophobic "Nightmares."

The three members were in isolation while writing many of *Screen Violence*'s glittering synth lines and plainspoken lyrics, but the album doesn't hew to expectations about what a "product of quarantine" might sound like. Its choruses are still anthemic; its keyboards still leap out of speakers. But if there's one aspect that feels very much of the pandemic era, it's the dread that seeps into even the sunniest tracks. On "Lullabies," Mayberry breaks from her musings on the world's cruelties to look at her frozen self: "I'm lying on the floor/What are we waiting for?" she wonders. "Final Girl," which pivots on the horror-movie trope of one last woman confronting the big baddie, puts Mayberry in the slot of burdened heroine.

That frame of mind also illuminates the reason Chvrches have risen in alt-rock's ranks over the last decade: Even amid all the worrying, their defiant, quivering music vibrates with possibility in a way that plainly and passionately refutes even the darkest moments of despair their lyrics express. **A–** —MAURA JOHNSTON

LITTLE SIMZ

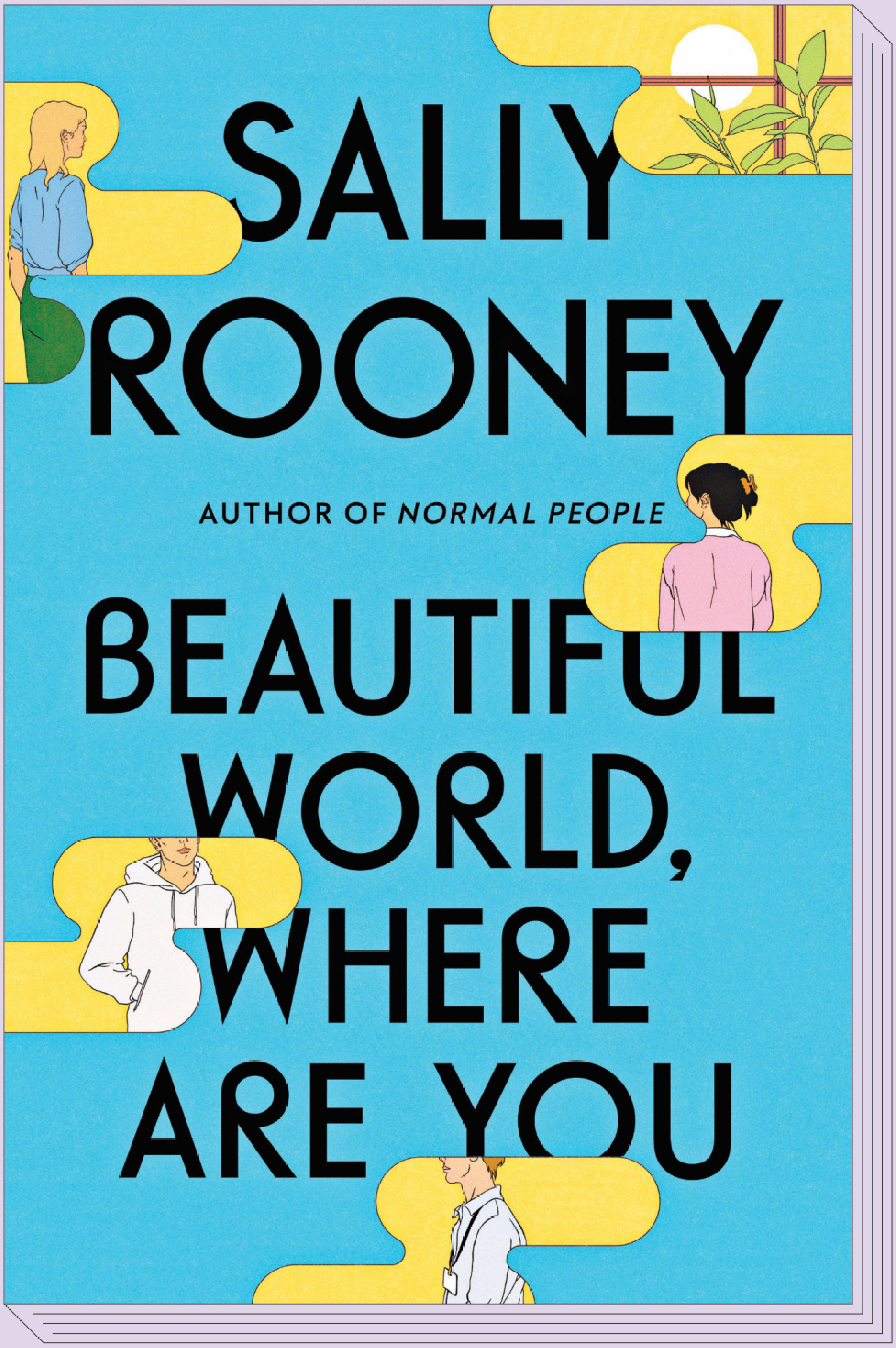
ALBUM *SOMETIMES I MIGHT BE INTROVERT*
LABEL AGE 101
GENRE HIP-HOP

**ON HER THIRD ALBUM, 2019'S *GREY* ***Area*, British rapper Little Simz endured the uncertainty of her mid-20s. A "midlife crisis" concept was a novel idea for a 24-year-old, and she fearlessly faced the challenge. On the album's follow-up, *Sometimes I Might Be Introvert* (out Sept. 3), Simz, now 27, once again showcases her vulnerability, opening up old wounds from relationships with her father, a past lover, and, ultimately, herself.

Across 19 tracks, the artist born Simbi Ajikawo is confrontational yet calculated."Standing Ovation" utilizes triumphant horns to convey the message of being gifted and blessed; "Point and Kill," featuring Nigerian artist Obongjayar, rolls through guitar licks as Simz vows that nothing will stop her; and "Woman," a swirling ode to Black women of all shades of the diaspora, celebrates perseverance and success.

Ultimately, *Introvert* sees a champion in its lead character: a Black woman proud of the steps she's taken while simultaneously analyzing how stardom can force her to check inward. "I really wanted it to work, and God is my witness," she raps on "Miss Understood." Standing in her truth, rocky as it may be, has given Little Simz power—one she feels comfortable sharing with the world. **B** —BRANDON CALDWELL

Sometimes
I
Might
Be
Introvert



BEAUTIFUL WORLD, WHERE ARE YOU

AUTHOR SALLY ROONEY
PAGES 368

THERE'S NO ACTUAL QUESTION mark in the title of *Beautiful World, Where Are You*, maybe because its weary, wary young protagonists have already come to their own grim conclusions: "I think of the 20th century as one long question, and in the end we got the answer wrong," one character confides early on. "Aren't we unfortunate babies to be born when the world ended? After that there was no chance for the planet, and no chance for us." And yet! They still argue and struggle and hope—and, this being a Sally Rooney novel, have a lot of semi-explicit and possibly ill-advised sex, the messy consequences of which will steer the narrative for the next 350-plus pages.

Rooney, of course, is the celebrated writer of *Normal People* and *Conversations With Friends*, both published before her 30th birthday. Alone, each book was a phenomenon; combined with last year's obsessively watched TV adaptation of *Normal* (and the coming limited series for *Conversations*, due to premiere next year), she became something exceedingly rare in an age of itchy digital distraction: a literary novelist who is also a household name.

Beautiful is the first of her works to be at least in part about that—"that" being money and fame and what it feels like to live inside the blast radius of your own sudden, life-obliterating success. And if those disclosures offer sometimes startling insight into its author's deeply rattled state of mind, they do not, alas, always serve her story. Rooney's proxy here is a woman named Alice, a fair-haired Dubliner driven to take up residence in the remote Irish countryside after her own precocious lit-world triumph leads to a psychiatric breakdown. Hardly anyone knows how to even find her on a map aside from her two closest friends: Eileen, an over-educated and underpaid magazine editor, and Simon, an earnestly handsome political activist five years older than them both. Eileen and Simon have long had a thing, though they seem loathe to acknowledge it to each other, or to themselves; Alice is single until she begins seeing Felix—a taciturn local who is shruggingly indifferent to his job in an Amazon-like warehouse, and shows even less interest in the fact that his new would-be girlfriend has her own Wikipedia page. (Though he's still willing to tag along as her plus-one on a work trip to Rome, generously sponsored by her publishers.)

The romantic roundelays and betrayals that ricochet between the foursome form the backbone of the book's scattered plot, such as it is. But much of the story lives in the letters that Alice and Eileen exchange over time—chatty, intimate epistles on faith and politics and sexual identity, the broken institution of marriage and the smoldering trash heap that is social media. There is much despairing discussion of celebrity as a "disfiguring social disease" and beauty as a thing that died in 1976, along with the birth of modern plastics. But Alice's harshest critiques are reserved for herself—or rather, the fun-house mirror of public perception she sees her warped reflection in: "I keep encountering this person, who is myself, and I hate her with all my energy. I hate her ways of expressing herself, I hate her appearance, and I hate her opinions about everything. And yet when other people read about her, they believe that she is me. Confronting this fact makes me feel I am already dead."

YOUR NEWEST *FRIENDS*

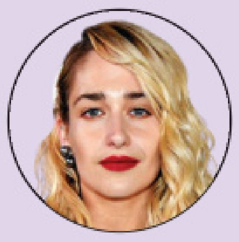
↓

The fresh faces of Sally Rooney's next adaptation, Conversations With Friends

Alison Oliver
"Frances"

Sasha Lane
"Bobbi"

Joe Alwyn
"Nick"



Jemima Kirke
"Melissa"

Alice and the rest of *Beautiful*'s restless youth are exactly the kind of fervent, clever truth seekers that Rooney has made her signature; at its best, the clarity of their presence slices across the page like a hot knife through butter. But the book's millennial cri de coeur can also tip into navel-gazing indulgence, heavy with the undergrad fugue of late-night dorm-room debates and clove-cigarette smoke. Their *World* isn't really new, after all; it's just new to them, spinning at the center as fast as they can. **B** —LEAH GREENBLATT

Quotable Sally Rooney

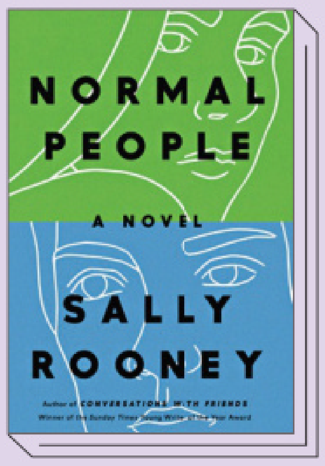
THE AUTHOR'S STRIPPED-DOWN PROSE MAKES FOR QUIETLY DEVASTATING PROCLAMATIONS. HERE ARE A FEW OF OUR FAVORITES FROM HER FIRST TWO NOVELS. ***By* Seija Rankin**

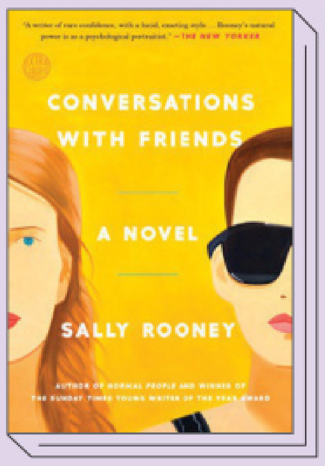
On malaise: "I sat inside for the hour before the launch pulling knots out of my hair with my fingers—pulling them so hard that little broken strands of hair tangled and snapped out. I thought: probably they won't even be there, and I'll have to come home and sweep up all these strands of hair and feel terrible. Probably nothing of import will happen in my life again and I'll just have to sweep things up until I die."
—*Conversations With Friends*

On books: "It was culture as class performance, literature fetishized for its ability to take educated people on false emotional journeys so that they might afterward feel superior to the uneducated people whose emotional journeys they liked to read about."
—*Normal People*

On love: "Whatever there is between [Connell] and Marianne, nothing good has ever come of it. It has only ever caused confusion and misery for everyone.… Still, he would lie down and die for her at any minute, which is the only thing he knows about himself that makes him feel like a worthwhile person."
—*Normal People*

On the end of love: "I wouldn't murder Nick, but it's important for you to know that if I tried, he would absolutely go with it. Even if he figured out that I was planning his murder, he wouldn't bring it up in case it upset me. I've become so used to seeing him as pathetic & even contemptible that I forgot anybody else could love him."
—*Conversations With Friends*





ROONEY: KALPESH LATHIGRA; LANE: GC IMAGES; ALWYN: FILMMAGIC; KIRKE: WIREIMAGE/GETTY IMAGES L

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

SALLY ROONEY'S IRELAND

The 30-year-old author may have single-handedly ushered in the return of the Event Novel—and inadvertently launched the concept of the Modern Millennial Writer—but she also introduced a new set of readers to the intricacies of her native Ireland (and gave her fellow countryfolk endless bragging rights). With her third novel, Beautiful World, Where Are You, *Sally Rooney builds her Irish literary empire with a story set in Dublin and beyond. Below, learn the significance of her literary landmarks—because it's not like this with other countries.* —SEIJA RANKIN

1 / Castlebar

The market town in County Mayo, on the western fringes of Ireland, is where Rooney was born in 1991. Her mother ran a community arts center and her father was a technician for a telecom company. While the town itself isn't written into her novels, the region is central to her latest release, *Beautiful World, Where Are You*, which follows a group of four interconnected young people as they navigate life and love in a pre-pandemic Ireland—and the author's socialist upbringing in the region laid the foundation for the Marxism that plays out in many of her characters.

2 / Dublin

It's Ireland's capital, sure, but Dublin is also home to Trinity College—and Trinity College (one of Europe's most elite) is to the Rooneyverse as Hogwarts is to *Harry Potter* (read: very significant). It's the author's alma mater—she studied English—and where she chose to send her protagonists in *Conversations With Friends* and *Normal People*. Two of *Beautiful*'s main characters attend an unnamed college in Dublin that closely resembles Trinity, and even Lenny Abrahamson, who directed six episodes of *Normal*'s BBC adaptation, is an alumnus. "Life would be different then," Rooney writes of the time when *Normal* character Connell is considering Trinity. "He would start going to dinner parties and having conversations about the Greek bailout."

3 / Sligo

On the page, Connell and co-protagonist Marianne grow up in the fictional town of Carricklea; on screen, the seaside Sligo—a tourist destination even before the show—stands in for the small, mostly working-class enclave where the complicated couple first fell in love. Production set up shop at several real-life businesses in the area, including Brennan's Bar, in nearby Tubbercurry, which played host to the New Year's Eve party scene in episode 12.

4 / Ballina

"I didn't think Nick had *culchie* friends," a man tells *Conversations* narrator Frances—using a slang term for someone from rural Ireland—when she mentions that her parents live in this picturesque riverside town. Frances grew up in a suburb of Dublin, making the insinuation as incorrect as it is judgmental, but Ballina shows up often in Rooney's novels. In *Beautiful*, Alice—a young and highly successful novelist—rents an isolated house as she grapples with the negative by-products of literary fame (sound self-fulfilling?).

5 / Streedagh Beach

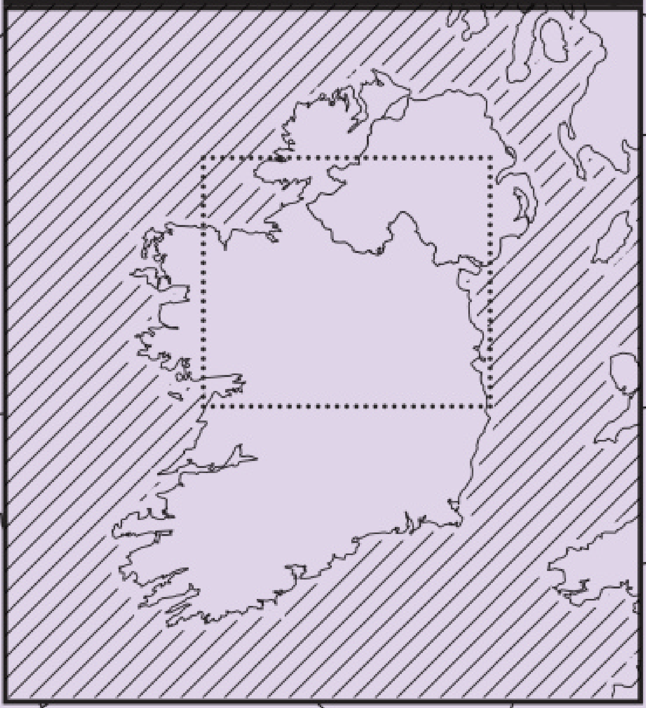
Normal People's now-iconic beach scene is unique to the onscreen version of the love story, but the stunning filming location is ready and waiting for Rooneyheads to make the requisite pilgrimage. Alexa, play "Hide and Seek" by Imogen Heap. ●

BALLINA
5
3
4
1
CONVERSATIONS WITH FRIENDS
CASTLEBAR
M6

ILLUSTRATION BY TIM VIENCKOWSKI

STREEDAGH BEACH

IRELAND



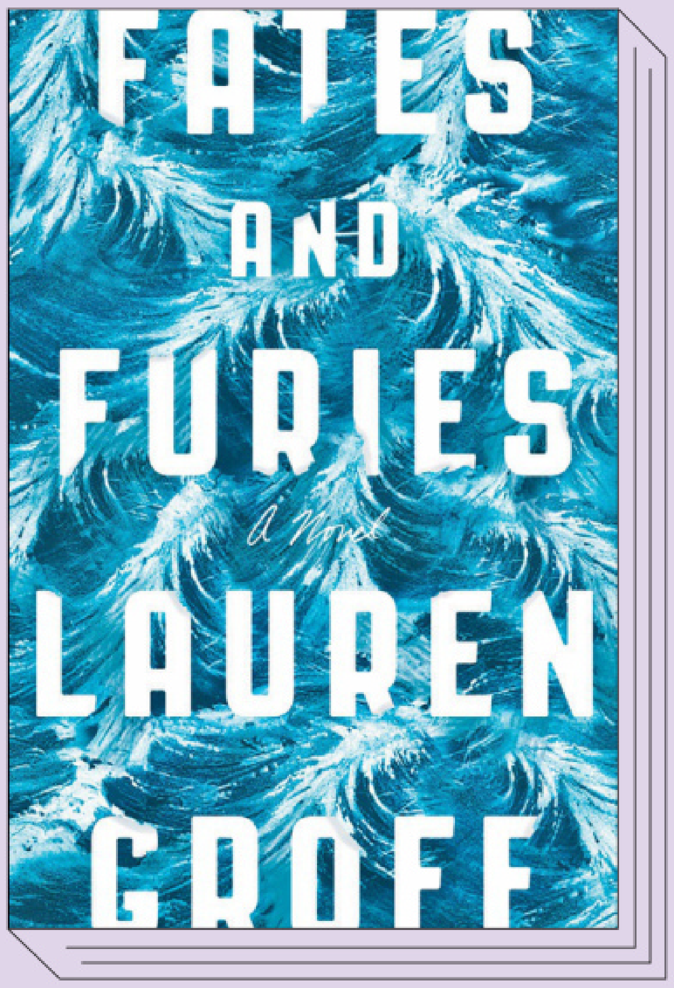
SLIGO

T. BRENNAN
Bar and Lounge
Beer Wines & Spirits
VINCENT'S
JAMESON

NORTHERN IRELAND
IRELAND
M1
M3
M2
2

DUBLIN

BALLINA, CASTLEBAR: ALAMY STOCK PHOTO (2); *NORMAL PEOPLE*: ENDA BOWE/HULU (3)



WE'RE STILL NOT OVER...

FATES AND FURIES

AHEAD OF HER NEXT NOVEL, *MATRIX* (SEPT. 7), **LAUREN GROFF** REFLECTS ON HER MOST MEMORABLE TOME—WARNING, SPOILERS ABOUND!

***By* Seija Rankin**

LAUREN GROFF WANTS US ALL to keep more secrets. And even though she wrote one of the most significant marriage novels of the past decade, 2015's *Fates and Furies*, she's not sure she wants us to be married, either. "I wrote the book in opposition to marriage," she says of *Fates,* her portrait of a relationship on fire told by a wife who knows it and a husband who does not. "Even though I am married, I don't necessarily believe in the institution—its patriarchal elements, the idea that you can't keep things from your significant other—and I was hoping to sort out the need for it."

Fans of the National Book Award finalist, which landed at the top of then President Obama's year-end list of favorites, will have seen the sentiment coming. As the book traced the love story of main characters Lotto and Mathilde from a college courtship to their bohemian years in New York City as a budding playwright and gallerist, respectively, to an idyllic middle age reaping the perks of artistic success, it laid the groundwork for one of the most delicious literary twists of the era: that Mathilde, puppet strings in hand and bursting with skeletons from the darkness she's kept hidden from her husband, has been orchestrating every step of Lotto's career.

Groff, 43, explains that *Fates* was originally conceived as two separate novels, meant to be read in either order; her agent, the famed Bill Clegg, urged the merging into a single work. She did a rewrite, placing Lotto's perspective at the beginning purely for practical purposes: "He dies, so he had to go first." Groff adds that she wasn't in Lotto's corner for much of the book—part of the pleasure of the slow-building reveal is the reader's ability to believe he is a golden boy whose talent brings him

GROFF: ELI SINKUS

prosperity, but Groff saw the house of cards for what it was. "A big struggle was getting myself to care about this man who gets everything, who has everything," she says. "He's so narcissistic, right?" While the author didn't write the novel with the aim of taking down the male gender, she is quick to point out that in *Matrix*, about nuns in medieval England (see page 17), she was compelled to create a literary feminist utopia: "I just eradicated men," she says with a laugh.

As popular as it was, *Fates*—like every novel worth its weight—had its share of detractors, mostly men who bristled at Mathilde's deceit or found it unrealistic that a woman could keep such a detailed inner life hidden from her husband. Groff doesn't read reviews—save the one by President Obama, which she had framed—but is aware of her protagonist's critics. "I want to defend Mathilde," she says. "She was entitled to her privacy even within her marriage. Just because you stand before a judge doesn't mean you give up your secret landscape." Groff also sees Mathilde's behavior as a "slightly more dramatic version" of the typical woman. One of her most vivid memories of *Fates*' promotional tour is the stream of women who spoke to her about their own histories of sex work, which mirrored Mathilde's experience and was more widespread than she realized. "I probably would have done the same thing as Mathilde," says Groff. "I'm 100 percent behind her decision to do it."

When crafting the life story of two people as complex (and complicated) as Lotto and Mathilde, it can be hard to know how to conclude it: What does the end look like for people who live as big as they do? Groff knew from the jump that Lotto wouldn't survive the first half of the story—"I chose an aneurysm because I wanted him to be taken unawares"—but Mathilde's journey needed more. "I wanted her to be at peace with the decisions she's made," says Groff. "I wanted to give her autonomy and, mostly, the ability to be happy without a husband." ●

3 QUESTIONS WITH

Cecily Strong

THE *SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE* STAR, 37, RELEASES HER FIRST MEMOIR, *THIS WILL ALL BE OVER SOON*, ABOUT ENDURING A DEATH IN THE FAMILY, THE PANDEMIC—AND *SNL AT HOME*. ***By* Sydney Bucksbaum**

1 / You lost your cousin Owen to brain cancer while you were quarantining in New York City, at the time the U.S. epicenter of COVID. How did writing during—and about—such a turbulent year help you grieve?
It was [difficult], but I'm really glad I did it. Writing every day allowed me to have moments where I got to sing and laugh. It is therapy—I'm just publishing my therapy for some reason [*laughs*]. I'm proud that I was able to write about Owen in a way that I think my aunt and uncle and cousin Leda [his sister] are happy with.

2 / What inspired you to start writing?
On the last day [before leaving New York during the pandemic], I was trying feverishly to pack and [the idea] just hit me all at once: I want to write about Owen. And then from there, it was: What happens if I keep writing? Before doing *SNL at Home* and being silly, I just wanted to state that this is where I am, and I want to honor this moment before I go back to fart jokes all the time—which is great! I want to be able to do both. But in order to do the fart jokes, I had to put it out there that I was not feeling great.

3 / The material in *This Will All Be Over Soon* shows a side of you that people don't normally see. Are you nervous about sharing that part of your life?
I've always been pretty private, so this is a big change. On *Saturday Night Live*, I'm always fully on display. I don't mind, like, spreading my legs on television. But to go from being a private person to then publishing your diary [*laughs*], that's very different. But I hope it makes you laugh too. And in real life, I cry all the time anyway. I cry and laugh, often.

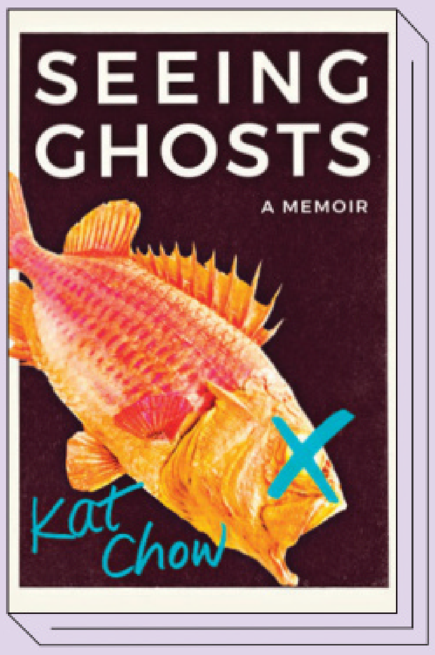
"Cecily Strong has written us a permission slip to process our losses, slowly and fully."
—Chanel Miller, National Book Critics Circle Award-winning author of Know My Name
THIS WILL ALL BE OVER SOON
a memoir
CECILY STRONG

STRONG: MARION CURTIS/STARPIX/SHUTTERSTOCK

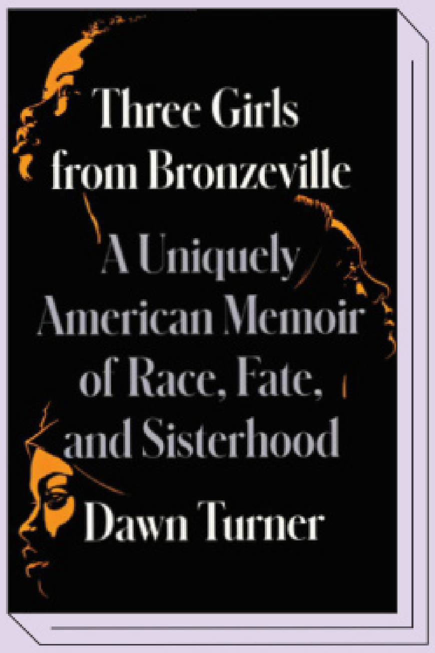
HIT LIST

MEMOIRS

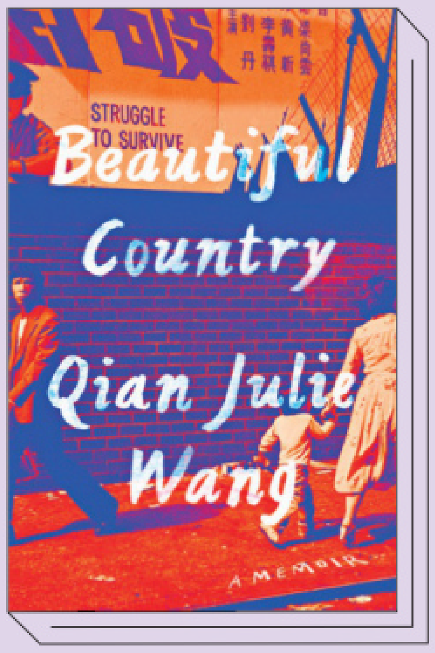
OUR PICKS FOR THE BEST READS FROM THIS FALL'S REAL-LIFE-LIT LINEUP. ***By* Seija Rankin**


SEEING GHOSTS
A MEMOIR
Kat Chow

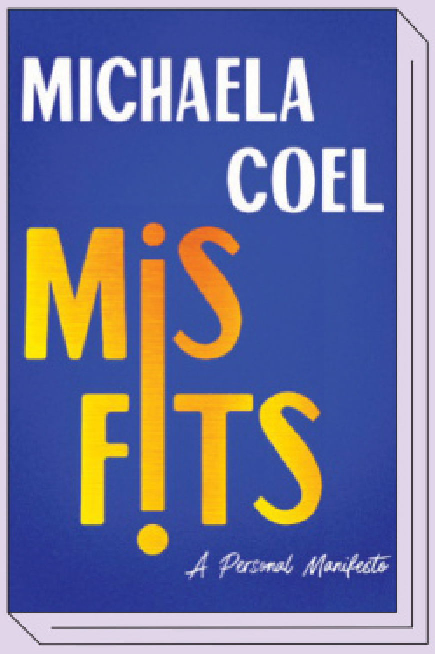
Seeing Ghosts
by Kat Chow
Fans of Michelle Zauner's *Crying in H Mart*—the spring's biggest memoir—will instantly recognize the themes at play in *Ghosts*; others won't be far behind in connecting to Kat Chow's story. The journalist (she was a founding member of NPR's Code Switch team) recounts the fear of death that haunted her childhood and the agony that descended when her mother passed away, unexpectedly, of cancer. As she explores the way the death changed her path, she manages to turn her tragic loss into the reader's gain.


Three Girls from Bronzeville
A Uniquely American Memoir of Race, Fate, and Sisterhood
Dawn Turner

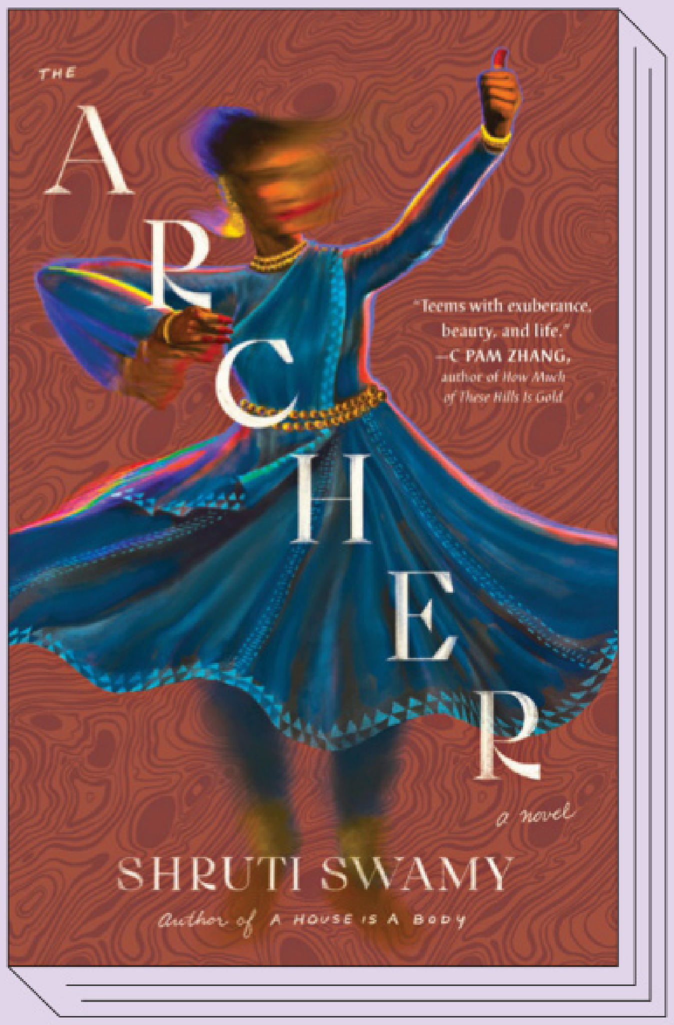
Three Girls From Bronzeville
by Dawn Turner
The Bronzeville neighborhood of Chicago, on the city's South Side, was shaped by the Great Migration: Hundreds of thousands of Black Americans moved north in an attempt to escape the devastation of Jim Crow laws. The titular girls here are the third generation of the movement. Author Dawn Turner explores her childhood with sister Kim and best friend Debra, who begin their lives in Bronzeville with similar hopes and dreams for their future but whose lives take on shockingly different dimensions.


STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE
Beautiful Country
Qian Julie Wang
A MEMOIR

Beautiful Country
by Qian Julie Wang
Made all the more poignant in the wake of anti-Asian sentiment that's swept the country the past year, Wang's memoir—she wrote it on the subway while commuting to her job as a lawyer—is one of an undocumented family living in poverty. Her parents were professors in China, but in America they toil in sweatshops while a young Qian hides out in the library, learning English through its collection of children's books. As her parents endure more institutional tragedies, Qian discovers her own version of America.


MICHAELA COEL
MISFITS
A Personal Manifesto

Misfits
by Michaela Coel
Less a memoir than a manifesto—or perhaps a rallying cry—the writer-director-actor behind 2020's firecracker hit series *I May Destroy You* builds on her celebrated 2018 MacTaggart Lecture (part of the Edinburgh International Television Festival in Scotland) in this slim yet highly impactful book. Coel, who aims to empower "misfits" (a group with which she self-identifies), reflects on everything from her London childhood to the trauma that lurks at the edge of her creative genius.


THE ARCHER
"Teems with exuberance, beauty, and life." —C PAM ZHANG, author of How Much of These Hills Is Gold
a novel
SHRUTI SWAMY
Author of A HOUSE IS A BODY

THE ARCHER

AUTHOR SHRUTI SWAMY
PAGES 304

VIDYA KNOWS THAT SHE IS SMALL and unimportant—a "stubborn girl, the same as a bad girl." Skinny, sallow, and for most of her short life motherless, she's indifferent to school and invisible at home in Bombay, where it's her duty to play thankless housemaid to a stern, preoccupied father and golden-boy baby brother. Until the day she discovers dance and "suddenly, the feet began to gather rhythm into them, to understand it, and the world flared open."

With its coiled energy and feverish imagery, *The Archer* often reads more like a lucid dream than a novel, oceans of wild feeling roiling just below the surface. Vidya dutifully earns a scholarship to a private girls' academy and then goes on to engineering school; she even makes a friend, a girl named Radha, as shy and single-minded as herself, and finds romance with a boy everyone agrees she is obscenely lucky just to be noticed by. But for her, dancing is all that matters, and Swamy writes about the imperatives of an artist's life with bright, furious poetry: the singular will of a body that burns to be in motion, and a mind set free.

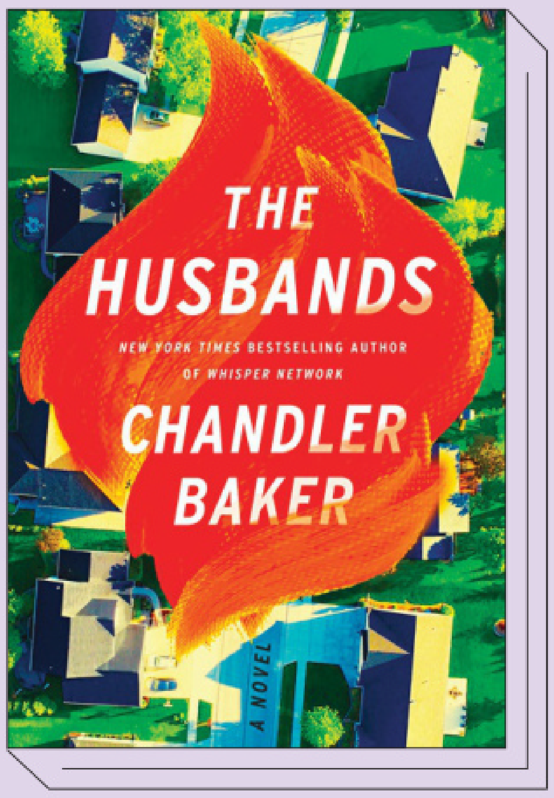
B+ —LEAH GREENBLATT

LITERARY MOOD BOARD

Chandler Baker

The best-selling thriller writer offers up her secrets to crafting the perfect page-turner

By Alamin Yohannes


THE HUSBANDS
NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF WHISPER NETWORK
CHANDLER BAKER
A NOVEL

CHANDLER BAKER IS FINDING HER voice—and her voice sounds a lot like success. With 2019's *Whisper Network*, she pivoted from YA to the world of domestic thrillers: "I leaned into my emotional truth," she says. Now, as she releases *The Husbands* (Aug. 3), a deadly tale about the mental load women carry, she shares the pop culture that fuels her.

The thriller novels that inspire me

I love work by Gillian Flynn, like *Gone Girl* **(1)**—she's just such an interesting writer. And I wouldn't necessarily call them thrillers, but I love all of Liane Moriarty's books; I thought *The Husband's Secret* had such a great "what would *you* do" aspect to it that I think *The Husbands* shares.

The snacks I need to write

I have a home office—I'm most in the flow of writing from 10 a.m. to mid-afternoon—and I'm really big on drinking hot water, or tea, and eating wasabi peas.

The TV show I watch when I'm looking for thrills

I loved *The Undoing* **(2)** on HBO; that was a great series. It's based on one of Jean Hanff Korelitz's books, and I found myself reading her new [novel], *The Plot*, which is incredible.

The music I play to help me write

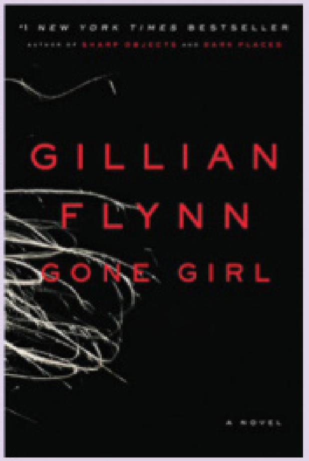
I do not listen to any music—I am a dead-silent writer!

What I watch when I need a break

I definitely prefer comedy, like *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia* **(3)** or *The Office*. I love that era.

What I learned writing this book

To listen to women around me and make them feel seen. I continued to find the voice I uncovered writing *Whisper Network* **(4)**. ●


#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER
AUTHOR OF SHARP OBJECTS AND DARK PLACES
GILLIAN FLYNN
GONE GIRL
A NOVEL

1

2

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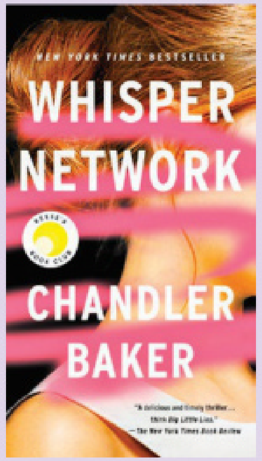

4

BAKER: ERYN CHANDLER; *THE UNDOING*: NIKO TAVERNISE/HBO; *IT'S ALWAYS SUNNY IN PHILADELPHIA*: PATRICK MCELHENNEY/FX

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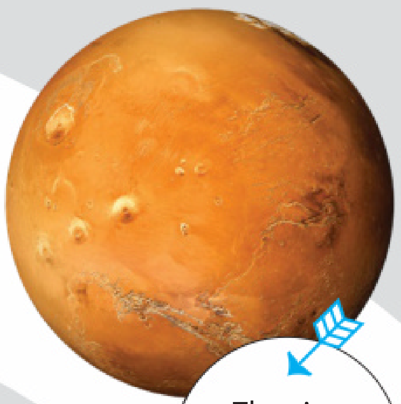
THIS MONTH'S HITS & MISSES

The Bullseye

BY ➔ DARREN FRANICH, OLIVER GETTELL, MARCUS JONES & MARY SOLLOSI

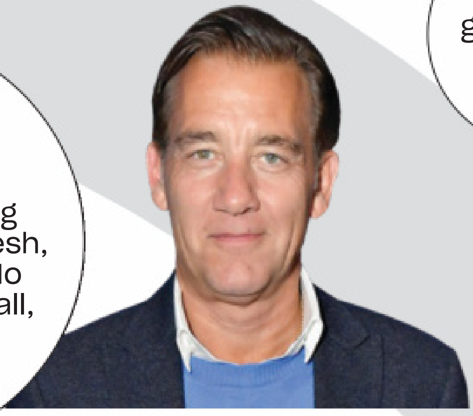
"Lexicon of American Fashion" Met Gala promises to reveal which celebrity is *most* accidentally problematic.



They're gentrifying space, man.

No Emmy noms for the *Girls5eva* songs? Add this crime to "I'm Afraid (Dawn's Song of Fears)."

See is what we won't do.



You already took our superheroes, Britain, stop playing our presidents! Yeeesh, you're so grabby. No wonder Scotland's all, like, "I'm out."

Amazing Race celebrates two decades of cutting around how much depends on fast cabdrivers.

Ten years later, we salute Jennifer Ehle's Dr. Ally Hextall, cinema's greatest scientist.

Two films in one year from this global treasure is more than our globe deserves.

Thank you, *Power* franchise, for prequelizing into the '90s and not the '80s. It took 31 years, but the '80s are finally over.

Slay all day, Guillermo.

Bullseye would like to scale this *Foundation*.

Thank You
Diana Ross

No, thank *you*.

Meanest Roy since Cohn, but hottest Kent since Clark.

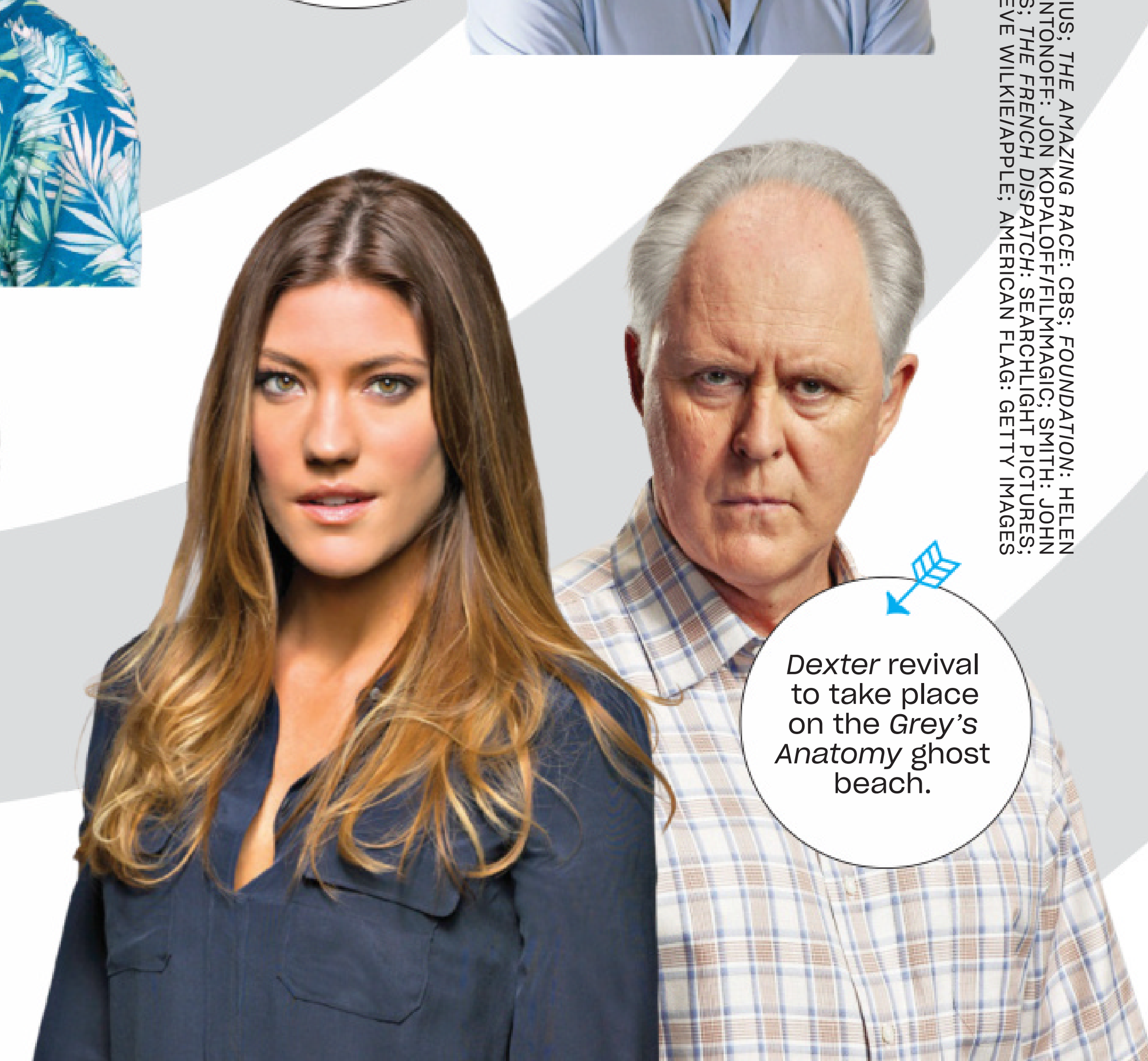
With her till the world ends.

Oh gosh, sorry, Lee Pace, you're a great actor. It's just been 18 long months in seclusion watching *Halt and Catch Fire*, and now Bullseye is thirsty.

We want to party with everyone on *White Lotus*, which is probably not the point of *White Lotus*.

Netflix ends Faustian bargain to keep *Lucifer* alive forever. "Someone's offering Faustian bargains?" asks Peacock.

Jack Antonoff actually worked with Diana Ross *and* just wrote a song with Zadie Smith. No offense, Jack, but can we cut out the middleman and get a Zadie/Diana collab?



Dexter revival to take place on the *Grey's Anatomy* ghost beach.

MARS: DETLEV VAN RAVENSWAAY/PICTURE PRESS/GETTY IMAGES; OWEN: MICHAEL LOCCISANO/GETTY IMAGES); *WHAT WE DO IN THE SHADOWS*: RUSS MARTIN/FX; *CONTAGION*: CLAUDETTE BARIUS; *THE AMAZING RACE*: CBS; *FOUNDATION*: HELEN SLOAN/APPLE; *HALT AND CATCH FIRE*: BOB MAHONEY/AMC; *THE WHITE LOTUS*: MARIO PEREZ/HBO (2); *DEXTER*: CARPENTER: ROBERT SEBREE/SHOWTIME; LITHGOW: DAVID STUDARUS/SHOWTIME; ANTONOFF: JON KOPALOFF/FILMMAGIC; SMITH: JOHN LAMPARSKI/GETTY IMAGES; *LUCIFER*: FOX; SPEARS: STEVE GRANITZ/WIREIMAGE; *TED LASSO*: APPLE TV+; *POWER BOOK III: RAISING KANAN*: CARA HOWE/STARZ; *NO SUDDEN MOVE*: CLAUDETTE BARIUS; *THE FRENCH DISPATCH*: SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES; *GIRLS5EVA*: VIRGINIA SHERWOOD/PEACOCK; *SEE*: STEVE WILKIE/APPLE; AMERICAN FLAG: GETTY IMAGES

JEFF DANIELS **MAURA TIERNEY**

AMERICAN RUST

LIES BENEATH
THE SURFACE

SEPT 12

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